BING

WINTER
1999

No. 123

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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Honorary Life Member	LESLIE GAYLOR	
MANAGEMENT TEAM		
Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556 e-mail: icc@iccircle.globalnet.co.uk
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	3 Osborne Close Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 2EE Tel: 01625 528942 e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com
U.S. & Canada Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel: (703) 241-5608
Australian & New Zealand Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	34A Geoffrey Street Turramurra, NSW Australia 2074
European Representative	ETTY GITS	Hoboken Straat 559 4826 EJ Breda Holland Tel: 076 - 5719 804 e-mail: Egits@casema.net
Assistant Secretary/ CD's/Records	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 02392 666677 e-mail: jimreilly@freenet.co.uk
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0208 959 3394 e-mail: lionelpair@hotmail.com
Photographs Editor/ Archivist	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone, Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2000 are:

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All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 1999.

EDITORIAL

Christmas 1999, a time for looking back - and forward. The end of a century and a millennium. What a vital part Bing played in the last 100 years as will continue to be recognised in the years ahead.

As a club we shall celebrate the 50th. anniversary of our formation next year and looking back we have so much to be proud of and so much to remember. All of the people who have put energy and enthusiasm into making the club what it is today. The ups and downs along the way, the occasional internal disputes and most of all the consistent support from Bing and from Larry Crosby during their lifetimes.

Looking ahead, we must not rest on our laurels and you will find a note of a meeting of many of the members of the management team elsewhere in this edition. Various issues are raised and we are keen to have feedback from members about these. Succession planning is one particular problem as we do not want to face the kind of crisis we had in 1989 when Reg Bristo could not continue as Editor. I am looking to work with an Assistant Editor (as I did with Ken Crossland) so that there will be continuity and I shall be delighted to hear from anyone interested in taking on the role.

A television profile of Bing by the prestigious arts programme, The South Bank Show, has been in preparation during the last few months and several of us have been involved in providing material for this. Further details follow in the magazine and I do hope that this will be fair and balanced assessment after the distortions of the 'Mysteries and Scandals' programme in the USA.

The Crosby calendar has been prepared earlier this year than usual with Jim Reilly working closely with Michael O'Toole to produce what is undoubtedly our best calendar so far. The photos have been provided by Derek Perkins and Ron Bosley. A flier is enclosed with the magazine so that you can place your orders. There is also a companion CD.

Lionel Pairpoint's incredible radio listing is nearing completion too and we are offering this as a numbered limited edition. This is really a 'must' for the serious student of Bing's career. Our thanks to Michael O'Toole for his work on this and to Ron Bosley who has provided over 120 photographs. Ron has had a very busy year. As you know, he regularly supplies photos for CDs and for the magazine. As mentioned above, he has had the calendar and the radio listing too and the final task for him this year was to lend over 100 photos to the team preparing the South Bank Show profile. When he started out collecting photos and press cuttings about Bing before the war, he could have had no idea what it would lead to in 1999!

I have set up a basic web site on the internet for BING magazine which links in to the Club's main site. My reasoning is that if someone searches against Bing's name they may be more likely to come across BING magazine than the 'International Crosby Circle' and already this approach has brought us several new members. I must emphasis that the site does not seek to compete with the marvellous

Bing Crosby Internet Museum site run by Steven Lewis nor with our own club web pages but it should help to make non-members more aware of us. The address is:-

http://members.aol.com/Macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html

Lionel Pairpoint is back in the magazine with a great article and as usual, my problem has been knowing what to leave out. Inside the back cover is an interesting piece by radio presenter Chris Robinson in the Plymouth Evening Herald which Maggie Ryan obtained on our behalf. Our gratitude is due to the photographer, Norman Hine, for releasing the actual photo to us. The back cover is a rather unusual picture of Bing with Jackie Gleason when they made Bing's 1976 Christmas Show in England.

My sincere thanks to all of our contributors who continue to make the magazine something really special. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Warmest seasonal greetings to all members as we approach the final weeks of this century, a period of time that has brought us the most tonally beautiful human voice ever heard. Bing often described himself as a strolling troubadour or wondering minstrel and in this sense we trust that his magnificent voice will continue to be heard in the decades to come.

As the century fades from our memory, broadcasters will look back at the accomplishments of the great entertainers and we trust that Bing will be accorded his rightful place as the Century's greatest and most *versatile* entertainer.

In looking back over the history of the ICC and its precursors we can be proud of the work we have done to keep Bing's name before the public and we owe an enormous debt to those who have striven and succeeded in making Bing's legacy available on compact disc.

LEEDS 1999

Malcolm will report fully on the events of Leeds 1999 elsewhere and here I would like to express my thanks to all 66 members who helped to make the day another joyous one to remember. It was a great pleasure to meet Bert Bishop for the first time and also to meet other members for whom this was their first visit.

Members of the team met to discuss issues relating to the future of the club and we appeal for your views on how we should run the club in the years ahead. As Malcolm has mentioned, an assistant editor will be a great asset to the club and members who have computer and display skills will be warmly welcomed as support for the management team. DO GET IN CONTACT WITH US IF YOU FEEL YOU COULD HELP.

We are most grateful to JONATHAN OYE of Wadsworth, Illinois and Wig & Laura Wiggins for making available the magnificent portrait of Bing which realised £72 for club funds. Eve Monk made available her late husband's collection for club funds and we are pleased to report that the sale brought £152 to the ICC account. We are deeply grateful for these magnanimous gestures.

It was a delight for me to commend the team for their wonderful efforts in the last year and we applauded the work of Wig and Laura, Ron and Vera, Malcolm and Pat, Jim, Keith, Lionel and Joyce, Etty, David and Bert. The amount of forbearance shown by spouses was highlighted!

On the Monday morning following the meeting a small gathering at my house met to continue our yearly celebration of Crosbyana. It was a great pleasure to be in the company of Etty Gits, Stanley Wayman, Michael and Joan O'Toole, Derek and Dorothy Perkins, Ole Meistrup and Gun Damo. We all agreed that what united us was Bing's wonderful voice.

NEW MEMBERS

Appeals from far and wide continue to reach us via the Internet and CD sleeves and we are delighted to welcome our first members from Japan and Italy.

JAPAN
MIHO SASAJI (Tororozawa City),
MANABU UGATA (Machi City)

ITALY
ANDREA ANNIBALDI (Rome)

IRELAND
JOHN DAVIS (Dublin 24)

SWEDEN
SVEN-INGMAR PETTERSON (Lerum)

UNITED KINGDOM
CHRISTINE RICE-GARWOOD, President Deanna Durbin Society (Argyll), E BARKER (Hants), DENIS COOK (Dorset), C BROWN (Cheshire), E M DERMOTT (Notts), DES CUSACK (Cambridge), G ORMESHER (Liverpool).

DONATIONS

We are most grateful for the generous donations made by RAY PURSLOW and CHARLES HALL

DEATHS

It is with much sadness that we report the deaths of:- PATRICIA SULLIVAN (Chico, California), V I C MONK (Bexleyheath, Kent) and NORMAN LLOYD (Kidderminster).

Pat Sullivan - President of Club Crosby for many years, died in August. Priscilla Koernig writes more fully later on in this issue but I must add a few words of my own. Pat's name was inextricably connected with Bing and Crosbyana for over 50 years and she will be warmly remembered for her connections not only with Club Crosby, but also with the British Crosby Society. Pat's love of Bing and his work was always evident in any letter or article that she wrote and I still treasure the first letter that she mailed me from the US in 1957! A letter which encouraged my involvement with the then British Crosby Society.

Our condolences are extended to all family members.

CALENDAR 2000

The combined talents of Michael O'Toole, Jim Reilly, Ron Bosley and the photographs of Derek Perkins have resulted in the best ever Bing Calendar. Pictures and artwork are superb and we urge all members to buy at least two copies of this ***COLLECTORS ITEM.*** Your support is essential if we are to produce calendars of this quality in future years so please order as many copies as you can afford from Jim Reilly.

THE ICC ON THE INTERNET

We are pleased to report that the site has been improved and you can now access a list of Bing's recordings plus several good photographs. A link is being established with Malcolm which will bring current ICC news including details of Lionel's radio listing when it is available.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2000

Your fee for 2000 is now due and I urge all members to make their payment early to allow me a little freedom as we approach the millennium celebrations! Increased fees apply to Great Britain and Europe with other overseas rates held for the time being as favourable exchange rates allow us to recover our costs. A special rate of £15 applies to Japan. *PLEASE HELP ME BY SENDING YOUR DUES EARLY.*

LEEDS 2000

October 1st 2000 will see us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the British Bing Club and we will reach our 35th anniversary in Leeds. We would like as many members as possible to come to Leeds for these significant events and we urge members to submit copies of photographs of previous social occasions that they would like displayed on the day. Michael O'Toole has kindly offered to arrange the display so please let us have copies of your favourite scenes from meetings of yesterday. Please submit laser photocopies so we do not damage your original prints.

****

Although my report is being written in October I am conscious that as the journal reaches you, your thoughts will be turning to Christmas and the special celebrations that you have planned to mark the end of the 20th century and the start of a new millennium. We sincerely hope that Bing will feature in your programme and that we as a dedicated society will promote Bing's work and achievements in the decades to come.

Until Spring 2000 my kindest personal regards.

Michael Crampton

BING ON THE SOUTH BANK SHOW

As we go to press, it looks as though the prestigious arts programme, the South Bank Show, presented on the UK's commercial television network by Melvyn Bragg, will be featuring Bing on December 26. The working title is 'Bing Crosby: The Voice of the Century' and the programme will run for 52 minutes.

The idea for the programme came from Ken Barnes who had been a discussing a possible profile of Fred Astaire. Unfortunately this project could not proceed so Ken suggested that the producers should look at a programme featuring Bing. The producer, Derek Bailey, telephoned Jim Reilly, asking if the ICC had any involvement with the Crosby family as Derek did not wish to proceed unless the family approved. Jim suggested that contact should be made with George O'Reilly and Derek was grateful for the idea as he remembered George from 1961 when Derek had interviewed Bing thanks to George making the arrangements. Derek and George duly met and George put in an incredible amount of effort to eventually obtain Kathryn Crosby's blessing for the project.

The producer interviewed Kathryn Crosby at her Hillsborough home, Mary Frances Crosby (now Mrs. Brodka), Rosemary Clooney, Rich Little, Nancy Olson, Les Paul, Gary Giddins, Ken Barnes and Alan Fisher amongst others. Jim Reilly loaned many of his videos to the production team for research purposes whilst Ron Bosley provided a huge number of photographs. I understand that suitable credits will be given at the end of the programme.

Most of us who were involved dealt with Jenny Borthwick, an efficient and charming lady, who in a short period picked up an amazing amount of detail about Bing and his career. Jenny visited Ron Bosley's home to select photographs and she was staggered by the size and range of Ron's collection.

Jenny Borthwick works her way through the scrapbooks under Ron Bosley's watchful eye.

We shall have a full review of the show in our Spring edition. It is understood that the show will be seen in the USA on the Bravo channel.

The Guinness Book of Records

The latest edition of this best selling book will be available in the shops as you read this edition of BING and hopefully Bing will remain in place for several achievements. Trevor Wagstaff regularly advises the researchers at Guinness World Records about Bing's career and he recently sent them the Bing Crosby Information File. He received a nice reply as follows:

"....rest assured, Bing Crosby is still a record holder with the most hits by a solo artist; most non-consecutive hits on the US singles chart; biggest selling Christmas song and best selling single in the world.

Thank you so much for the information file, I'll find that very useful in seeing if we can find any other record for him!"

Well done, Trevor. Keep up the good work.

International Popular Culture Conference

This conference was organised by the American Popular Culture Association and took place at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge during the first week of August. Roger Osterholm applied to present a panel to discuss 'Bing Crosby: An International Star' and he invited Ken Barnes, George O'Reilly and me to take part.

The presentation took place in a small and cramped room which rather restricted the size of the audience but nevertheless the delegates were attentive and appreciative as we made our presentations. Time ran against us and unfortunately we had to curtail the final talk by Ken Barnes which was a great pity as Ken was illustrating the way Bing's voice and style had changed over the years. However it was a useful exercise in promoting Bing and we were delighted to see members Ole Meistrup and Gun Damo from Denmark and Ron Holder and his wife from Norfolk there too.

Our thanks to Roger Osterholm, Ken Barnes and George O'Reilly for their hard work.

Malcolm Macfarlane

LONDON PRIDE

In September, a very special Crosby gathering took part at the Kennedy Hotel in London where Gord and Elaine Atkinson from Canada were passing through on their way to an Italian holiday. Gord suggested that it would be nice to see a few old friends whilst in London and your Editor, Lionel Pairpoint and Jim Reilly had a magical afternoon with Gord and Elaine. Gord's many stories of his show-business encounters were fascinating and kept us spellbound. Ken Barnes and his wife Ann joined us later in the day and were followed an hour or so later by Pete Moore and Maggie.

The many heartwarming stories confirmed our view of Bing as a genuine and thoughtful man. Shy at first but a true and long lasting friend when he got to know you. These comments together with details of many of Bing's low profile charitable activities made me feel really proud to be a Crosby fan.

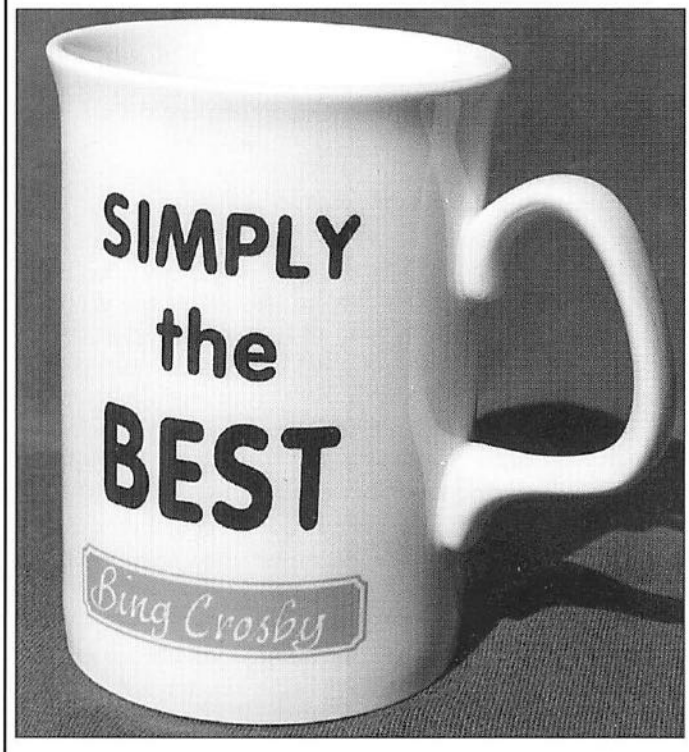
Gord's radio series 'The Crosby Years' is very good listening indeed and Gord is considering the best method to make the 14 hours of material available to our members. Also Gord gave me copies of many of the letters he had received from Bing over 30 years. Obviously I cannot reproduce all of these and to select just one or two is very difficult. However I shall pick out a few of these for future issues of the magazine.

Lest We Forget

Roger Osterholm mentioned the Office of War Information film 'Lest We Forget' in BING #113. The film is an 83 minute feature on the defeat of Nazi Germany and it contains brief footage of Bing in France in September 1944, probably at Chalons-sur-Marne. Bing is seem on a stage with musicians behind him. Chris Way has told us that the video has now been released in the UK by D.D. Video (their number DD3357) and he picked up a copy at W. H. Smith for £11.99.

Simply the Best

Stan White's Christmas present from Maggie Ryan in 1998 was the mug pictured below. There are many shops offering to put photos etc. on mugs but what a good idea of Maggie's to have the mug prepared in this way. A nice stocking present for our members? Partners please note!



LATE NEWS

As we went to press, I received an e-mail from Gary Giddins giving me the news that his long awaited book on Bing would be published in two volumes. The first one will be issued in October 2000 and will cover Bing's life up until Oscar night 1945. Volume 2 will appear in May 2003 to coincide with the centenary celebrations of Bing's birth. Gary went on to say:

> *Now for the first time I'm pretty confident the book will be published as I envision it. The sheer bulk should say something about Bing's importance and I'm counting on it to increase interest in his records and movies, so many of which are unavailable (I go on for 10-15 pages each on films like Dr Rhythm and Sing You Sinners, and much longer on the Road to.... and the McCareys). If Elvis can get two volumes, Bing certainly ought to.*

Gary mentioned that it is a commercial risk in going for two volumes because if number one does not sell, number two might not happen but his publisher seems very happy with the manuscript and is happy to take the risk. Please see the article on page 17 for further details of Gary's project.

BING IN THE USA

PLEDGING WITH BING

Public television stations in the U.S. conduct on-the-air pledge drives two or three times each year to raise funds from viewers to support the cost of their broadcasting activities. During these pledge drives, special TV programs are shown, and each station usually welcomes a popular entertainment personality into its studio to participate in the live "pledge breaks" that are interspersed between segments of the pre-taped programming. On August 7, 1999, television station WHYY in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania featured a special video prepared by the Top Gold Company (which is owned by Pat Boone) entitled "THE CROONERS". Pat Boone not only introduced and narrated the video program, but he also was in the WHYY studio in person to participate in the pledge breaks and respond to comments and questions from the studio and viewing audiences.

"THE CROONERS" video was a warm and thoughtful history of popular singing, which Pat characterized as "songs filled with love and melody from the golden age of American music". The video program devoted three-to-five minute segments to a dozen of the most popular crooners from the 30's, 40's and 50's, including Al Jolson, Rudy Vallee, Russ Columbo, Nat "King" Cole, Perry Como, Vic Damone, Al Martino, Vaughn Monroe, Mel Torme, Johnny Mathis, Eddie Fisher, and Billy Eckstine. Pride of place in both the video program and Pat Boone's live comments in the WHYY studio was given to Bing, whom Pat called his "idol" when he was growing up in Tennessee during the 1940's. Pat added that Bing's records were always played in his home at that time "when kids still liked the same music as their parents."

Pat also emphasized that Bing was "the true father of crooning who defined the genre" through his easy-going style on records and radio, and that Bing was a profound influence on his own singing when he began his professional career. Pat acknowledged that he tried to imitate Bing — as did so many other popular singers — and that he was proud to have known Bing personally and to have received a letter of encouragement from Bing about his singing even before they first met. Referring to Bing in the video program as "a national treasure", Pat introduced a clip of the Bing-Buddy Cole performance of "It Had To Be You" from Bing's General Electric television special of 1954, with Bing leaning casually against Buddy's piano while he sang.

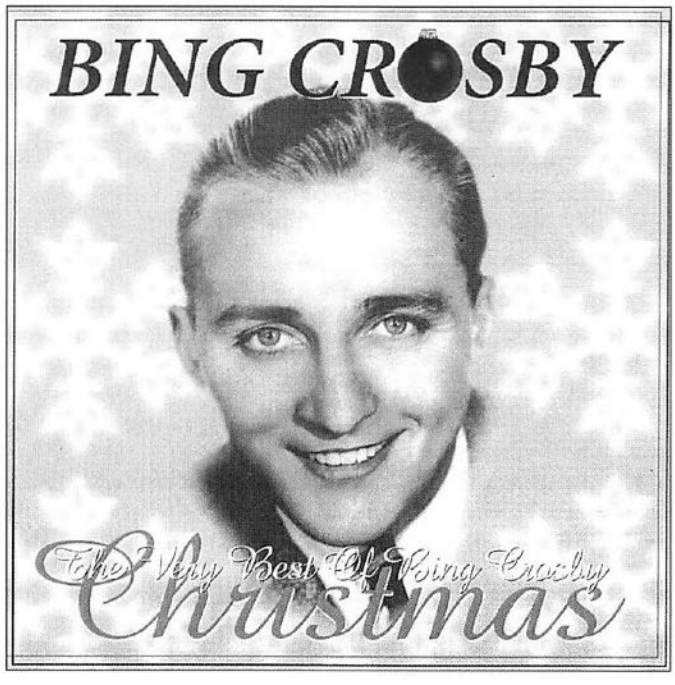
The video version of Pat Boone's "THE CROONERS" was offered as a special gift to local viewers in the Philadelphia area who pledged at least $150 to station WHYY during the evening. Unfortunately, the video may not be made available for sale commercially. It is possible, however, that the video may be shown in the future on other public television stations around the country, so I encourage American ICC members to be on the lookout for it on their local stations. I would like to thank fellow ICC members Frank Dolson and Keith Herbst of the Philadelphia area for bringing this unusual television program to my attention so that I could provide this review for the readers of BING.

MORE ALTERNATE TAKES ON CD

On July 26, 1944, Bing recorded two songs for Decca in Los Angeles with Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five: "My Baby Said Yes" and "Your Socks Don't Match". The designated "A" take of each song was issued commercially in 1945 on the American Decca Black Label as a 78 rpm single record, catalog number De 23417. Crosby collectors have long been aware that there were three other alternate takes recorded that day by Bing and Louis Jordan which were never issued commercially. But, at last, the compact disc era has provided two of the three missing alternates for our music libraries. Our thanks are due to Universal Music of California (MCA) and to the Bear Family of Germany for their recent releases of these two rare alternate takes. Here is a complete list of the five Bing/Louis Jordan recordings and their current availability on compact disc.

L3477-A "My Baby Said Yes" - MCAD4-10887/BCD-15557
L3477-B "My Baby Said Yes" - still unissued
L3478-A "My Baby Said Yes" - GRD-603/BCD-15557
L3479-A "Your Socks Don't Match" - GRD-603/BCD-15557
L3479-B "Your Socks Don't Match" - BCD 15557
BCD-15557 "Louis Jordan - Let The Good Times Roll", GRD-603 "Bing Crosby and Some Jazz Friends", MCAD4-10887 "Bing Crosby - His Legendary Years"

Thus far, no test pressing of the unissued "B" take of the L3477 version of "My Baby Said Yes" has surfaced, so this unheard take may be permanently lost to collectors. But the other four takes can be added to our CD collections as indicated. Detailed listings of the available CDs can be found in fellow ICC member Jim Reilly's invaluable book, "THE SONGS OF BING CROSBY ON COMPACT DISC".



CHRISTMAS WITH BING

Sales during last year's Christmas shopping season of MCA's two-CD set of Bing's Decca holiday recordings, "BING CROSBY; THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS (MCAD2-11840), exceeded Universal Music's expectations. As a result, this set will again be available in music stores this year and hopefully will establish itself as a perennial best-seller for Bing. If you were not able to obtain a copy last Christmas, be sure to do so this year.

This past Spring, Universal Music's Vice President Andy McKaie asked me to compile a new single CD containing the most popular titles from "THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS" for release during the 1999 Christmas shopping season, which would be less expensive and, therefore, might have wider appeal to the general public. We then selected eighteen titles, and I wrote the liner notes for a new CD set, which is entitled "BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS (The Very Best of Bing Crosby)". It was released in mid-October with catalog number MCAD-12019. This new MCA compact disc collection contains only one version of each song, and features Bing's 1942 recordings of "Adeste Fideles", "Silent Night" and "White Christmas".

The major attraction for Crosby collectors will be a new transfer to CD of Bing's first commercially-released recording of "White Christmas" (DLA3009-B). All previous transfers of this version of Irving Berlin's classic have suffered from poor sound, but this time a real effort has been made to correct that problem. In response to a request from me, our ICC representative in Australia, David Currington, obtained a new transfer to CD from a mint copy of the Australian commercial pressing of "White Christmas", which he kindly provided for MCA's use in this new collection of Bing's holiday recordings. So, at last, we can all enjoy "White Christmas" restored to the bright, rich sound that was originally committed to wax by Bing back on that historic May morning in 1942. We all owe David a big vote of thanks for his invaluable contribution to this effort.

Please refer to Jim Reilly's "Keeping Track" column elsewhere in this issue of BING for further details and a complete title listing for "BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS (The Very Best of Bing Crosby)".

BING'S GOOD FRIEND, PAT SULLIVAN

After some twenty-five years as a "lone-wolf,' Crosby collector, I finally learned of the existence of the American Club Crosby in the early 1970's from the liner notes on one of Bing's LP records, and promptly joined. In turn, that led to my eventual membership in other Crosby clubs, including the ICC, and a welcome expansion of my contacts with Bing fans around the world. When I joined Club Crosby and received my first issue of "BINGANG", the editor of that magazine was Pat Sullivan of Chico, California. Over the quarter century that has passed since that time, Pat became a valued friend who proudly shared her admiration for Bing in many ways, including her leadership of Club Crosby and her active membership in the ICC. Always joining with Pat Sullivan in her many Crosby activities was her close friend, Priscilla Koernig of San Mateo, California.

It was quite a shock when Priscilla telephoned me in August to say that she had just learned Pat had unexpectedly passed away on July 25, 1999. During our conversation, I asked Priscilla to write a tribute to her friend Pat for this issue of BING, so that all ICC members might have a better appreciation of Pat's many fine qualities and how much she contributed to the preservation of Bing's legacy over so many years. Priscilla's moving tribute to Pat Sullivan will be found elsewhere in this issue, and I would only like to add my personal regrets at the loss of one of Bing's true friends and admirers whom I had the privilege of knowing only through letters and long-distance telephone calls.

BING ON TELEVISION IN THE USA

Although not as often as we would like, and limited in number, some of Bing's films do continue to appear on regular broadcast and cable television channels throughout the U.S. every month. Showings during July, August, September and October of this year were as follows.

July 1999

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD - July 4 (Disney Channel)
ANYTHING GOES (1956) - July 3,12 (Encore Channel)
BLUE OF THE NIGHT (Mack Sennett Short) - July 14 (American Movie Classics)
THE COUNTRY GIRL - July 25 (American Movie Classics)
FLIP WILSON SHOW (Bing, Tim Conway, Melba Moore) - July 8 (TVLand)
ROAD TO BALI - July 26 (American Movie Classics)
STAGECOACH (1966) - July 1,5,17,27,28 (Encore Channel)
STAGECOACH (1966) - July 29,30 (Fox Movie Channel)

August 1999

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD - August 9 (Disney Channel)
THE COUNTRY GIRL - August 18 (American Movie Classics)
FLIP WILSON (Bing and the Supremes) - August 3,23 (TVLand)
GOING HOLLYWOOD - August 10 (Turner Classic Movies)
HIGH SOCIETY - August 10 (Turner Classic Movies)
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG - August 30 (Turner Classic Movies)
STAGECOACH (1966) - August 28,29 (Fox Movie Channel)

September 1999

THE COUNTRY GIRL - September 5,13 (American Movie Classics)
FLIP WILSON (Bing and the Supremes) - September 20 (TVLand)
HIGH SOCIETY - September 28 (Turner Classic Movies)
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG - September 8 (Turner Classic Movies)
ROAD TO RIO - September 6 (American Movie Classics)
SAY ONE FOR ME - September 12 (Cinemax Channel)
STAGECOACH (1966) - September 1,12,16,25 (Encore Channel)

STAGECOACH (1966) - September 14,15,29,30 (Fox Movie Channel)

October 1999

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - October 19,20,31 (Encore Channel)

THE COUNTRY GIRL - October 7,8 (American Movie Classics)

FLIP WILSON SHOW (Bing, Tim Conway, Melba Moore) - October 6 (TVLand)

GOING HOLLYWOOD - October 21 (Turner Classic Movies)

HIGH SOCIETY - October 28 (Turner Classic Movies)

MYSTERIES AND SCANDALS ("Singer Bing Crosby's battles with alcoholism and violent mood swings; how the violence hurt his family.") October 12,13,16,17 (E! Entertainment Channel)

PHIL SILVERS (Sgt. Bilko Presents Bing Crosby) - October 4,5 (TVLand)

SAY ONE FOR ME - October 1 (Cinemax Channel)

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS!?!

During the second half of the soon-to-be-ended Twentieth Century, Bing's recording of Irving Berlin's modern holiday classic, "White Christmas", has become a cherished part of festive celebrations around the world — even in distant lands that have never seen a snowflake — except in the movies or on television. It is difficult to remember a time when Bing's warm remembrances of a Christmas "just like the ones we used to know" were not a welcome part of Yuletide celebrations every December. But with the spreading virus of "political correctness" seeping into so many aspects of our everyday lives, and the ever-more prevalent use of euphemisms in public speech (often to mask something we don't like or disagree with), it was perhaps only inevitable that even "White Christmas" would eventually suffer from some ridiculous form of modern revisionism. So as we approach the time when we may, at last, be able to rid ourselves of Y2K gremlins and move into the Twenty-first Century, I regret to report that my local newspaper, The Washington Post, is asking us to face the dawn of the new Millennium with the following words of contemporary wisdom to guide our way.

On this heartwarming note, I would like to close with sincerest best wishes to all our fellow members throughout the world from my wife, Laura, and myself for a healthy and prosperous New Year and a successful "Bing 2000" to come. And we hope to see everyone again in the next issue of BING, as the new century begins to unfold.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins October 15, 1999

CIGARETTE CARD CROSBY

Clive Menadue returns with an in-depth look at a little known part of Crosbyana.

Before I begin my canter through the world of cigarette and trade cards and Bing's place in it, I think it's my duty to inform you that a considerable proportion of the staff at BING headquarters are drunk with power! Now I know that the kindly and well disposed folk who read our magazine will be shocked and incredulous at the sight of these lines, but I can only relate to you my own experiences.

Just a few short weeks ago I happened to be halfway through an intensive fitness course that I had devised for myself. This involves the adoption of various muscle straining positions in a deep and extremely pliant armchair and I was just drifting off into a well earned snooze when the phone rang. As soon as I placed the receiver to my ear I heard various yells and screams plus the clink of bottle and someone in the background desperately attempting to sing Bing's theme tune in a slurred and gut wrenching voice. Having a pretty nimble mind I suspected at once that 3 was not being contacted by my local chess club! The various sounds of people the worse for strong liquor could only mean one thing,— I was in contact with the offices of BING magazine!

"Hello" I said, displaying my usual keen wit and natural charm.

"This is your leader," said an acid voice at the other end, "and never mind the pleasantries!"

This was the man known throughout Crosbyana as "M". He was obviously in a foul mood and it turned out that he wanted an article from me for the magazine.

"I wouldn't have asked YOU" he went on, "But all our decent writers are busy. Just hurry it up and let's have none of your usual junk!!"

With that parting shot he slammed the phone down. Well I thought, I'll bet Lionel Pairpoint and Jim Reilly don't get this kind of treatment. Now I don't want you to think that I don't have my admirers. I have only recently been inundated by a letter from a Mister Jake Nutt of no fixed abode. He says (in this cleaned up version) of my last piece in BING.

GARBAGE, — BUT KEEP TRYING. I certainly will Mister Nutt, — and thank you. By the way, the autographed portrait of me that you forgot to ask for will be on its way to you as soon as you can find an unoccupied shack somewhere.

Perhaps this would be as good a place as any to turn our backs upon the slurs and unpleasantness of the workaday world and engross ourselves in that portion of the world of Cartophily - collecting cards— that pertains to Bing Crosby and his appearances on these - to me - fascinating little cards.

Cigarette cards originated (as do so many things both good and bad) in America in the 1870s. Plain cards were originally inserted to stiffen the paper packets that contained the cigarettes. Although the earliest cards were issued singly, the manufacturers soon realised that by issuing cards by series they could hook consumers and draw them towards their products. Soon, British tobacco

firms entered the market. W D & H O Wills were soon joined by John Player & Sons. Ogdens were not far behind. Undoubtedly the period between the two world wars was the golden age for collectors as cards were produced in greater quantity than ever before. They covered a wide range of subjects such as sporting stars/historical figures/Hollywood beauties and, of greater interest to BING readers, many sets of film stars.

As the collecting of cards grew immensely popular as a hobby throughout the 1930s so did Bing's singing mature and grow in stature until, in the late thirties the radio listening and record buying public were unable to avoid the conclusion that they were in the presence of a natural voice of unsurpassed tonal beauty the like of which this century had never before heard nor was ever to hear again. It will come as no surprise then when I say that Mister Crosby appeared on very many cards during this period. The problem is — as I discovered when I began to research this article — that there appears to be no reference book that lists the individual subjects of each published card and that card's essential number. There are very many sets of cards featuring film stars and radio stars that might be quite likely to contain a portrait of Harry Lillis but with sets starting at £40 or so it's easy to see that a wallet full of money could be laid out in speculative buying that might net just the odd card of value to Bing fans. How then to trace Bing's appearances on the cards so that the number of his particular card can be quoted in ordering a solitary card if a set can not be afforded? How indeed to ascertain if the old groaner is present in any particular set? Fortunately, I was able to get into contact with Mr. Frank C. Doggett who is a director of THE LONDON CIGARETTE CARD CO. and also the editor of THE CIGARETTE CARD NEWS. With his kind co-operation I have been enabled to tap into the expertise of his many readers and thus I've been able to compile the following details of at least a few of Bing's miniature portraits on cards.

I think we ought to begin with a somewhat mysterious set.

AMERICAN CONSOLIDATED THEATRES —"CINEMA STARS." - BING IS NO. 1

Now this set is not listed in any catalogue that I possess and I have no details to give you; but should you be fortunate enough to come across these cards I would imagine that you will find them to be expensive, especially as the first and last card in any set will always cost more than any other card when bought individually. Luckily Bing rarely occupies these positions. Perhaps some of our American readers will be familiar with these cards and will be able to enlighten us as to their availability. From this point on I intend to list the sets according to age. First up then is:-

JOHN SCERRI (MALTA)—"TALKIE STARS" (1932) BING IS NO.28

I find it a little surprising that Bing should have featured this early in the thirties but he was obviously very big in Malta! These are large photographic cards and there are 100 of them in the set. It appears that this set is so rare that only single cards priced at £2:00 each are possibly available.

Now we come to a firm that issued a prolific number of cards and often featured Bing in its sets:-

GALLAHER—"CHAMPIONS OF SCREEN AND STAGE". (1934) BING IS NO.4

This, the first of three GALLAHER sets containing an image of H L. Crosby consists of 48 cards costing £24:00 for the set and 50p for a single card. This set has a red printed back and is the commonest of the three sets. We have an illustration of this card and you will observe the unfortunate cap and the even more unfortunate moustache which seems to give him the appearance of a short order cook during his lunch break! There is mention on the reverse side of his most recent film being "ALICE IN WONDERLAND." We are still awaiting this one in the ruins of what was once my local cinema.

BING
CROSBY
(PARAMOUNT)
CHAMPIONS OF SCREEN & STAGE
SERIES OF 48. No 4
BING CROSBY
Bing Crosby first entered the theatrical profession with two others as "The Three Rhythm Boys." He was born in 1904, in Tacoma, Washington, and got his first big part when still quite young in "The Big Broadcast." This made a name for the "Bing Crosby Croon" which has since been heard in "College Humour" and "Too much Harmony." His recent films include "Alice in Wonderland." Another Paramount star in this series is Sylvia Sidney (No. 25).
PARK DRIVE
CIGARETTES
Gallaher Ltd.
VIRGINIA HOUSE. LONDON & BELFAST

GALLAHER—"FILM PARTNERS" (1935) BING IS NO.33

48 cards in the set costing £36:00. Single cards priced at 75p. Again we have an illustration for this card. I don't know what's happened to the colour on this one. Call me picky if you wish but I can't get on with that hairpiece. For a start it's not the one we saw in the film and it's a dreadful shade that hovers somewhere between orange and red. I can only assume that Bing (always careless of his appearance) borrowed it from an extra appearing in "Six Bullets For Abdul The Cruel," which was being shot on a nearby sound stage. But now the good news; we are at least spared from the moustache which had audiences in those days fighting their way to the screen with cut throat razors intent on skimming off the dreadful thing that had invaded Bing's upper lip! To have seen it in that shade of red would have been more than flesh and blood could stand.

BING CROSBY
JOAN BENNETT
FILM PARTNERS
SERIES OF 48. No 33
BING CROSBY and
JOAN BENNETT in
" MISSISSIPPI "
(PARAMOUNT)
In this " old South " period film, which contains a number of delightful songs, Bing Crosby appears as Tom, a young singer from Philadelphia, whose refusal to fight a duel leads to the breaking off of his engagement to Elvira. The story tells of his efforts to study Southern etiquette and how he achieves fictitious fame as " the singing killer." Joan Bennett is ideally cast as Elvira's pretty little sister, who falls in love with Tom and eventually wins his heart.
ISSUED BY
GALLAHER LTD
VIRGINIA HOUSE, LONDON & BELFAST

GALLAHER—"SHOTS FROM FAMOUS FILMS." (1935) BING IS NO.1

A set of 48 once more costing £29:00. Single cards at 60p each. As I've already stated, the first and last cards in a set inevitably cost more and as Bing is No 1. here you can expect the card to cost a good deal more. Once more we are able to bring you an illustration of the card. You'll be desperately glad to know that I like this one. Bing always looked at his best in a peaked cap and here he has been provided with one. Incidentally, I don't know if you recall Miss Lombard clinging tightly to our favourite crooner while he sang, "Once in a Blue Moon" but it always reminds me of a scene in a Marx brothers film when Groucho is tightly embracing a woman. "Closer, closer" she cries. Groucho leers at the audience before turning back to the woman to bark, "If I was any closer, I'd be in back of you!"

SHOTS FROM FAMOUS FILMS
SERIES OF 48. N°1

"WE'RE NOT DRESSING"
A Paramount Picture

Bing Crosby and Carole Lombard here star together in a musical comedy, of which the action takes place on a yacht at sea and on an almost uninhabited island. The film is true to musical comedy tradition, and Bing Crosby, mournful as a misunderstood sailor, sings several popular songs. Carole Lombard is the owner of the yacht, of whose crew he is a member.

ISSUED BY
GALLAHER LTD
VIRGINIA HOUSE, LONDON & BELFAST

GODFREY PHILLIPS-FILM STAR POSTCARDS" (1934) BING IS NO.15

As the title suggests, these are postcard sized and are priced at £24:00 the set while the single cards cost £1:00 each. Confusingly, there are three almost identical sets in the catalogue and it's not at all clear which one contains Bing's portrait. There are 24 in the set and they consist of real photographs.

PETER JACKSON—"FAMOUS FILMS" (1934) BING IS NO.9

This set contains 27 cards. All the cards are real photographs and are priced as follows. £81.00 the full set and £3:00 for a single card. This is a little known set and you'll be fortunate to get hold of a sample even if the prices haven't welded your wallet shut.

BRIDGEWATER BISCUITS—"FILM STARS" (4th SERIES 1935) BING IS NO.40

There are 48 cards to collect and the full set is priced at £20:00. Singles are sold at 40p per card. We have a sample reproduced here and, as you can see, these are quite small photos of the stars in a sepia finish. Bing's wife Dixie must have personally supervised his outfit on that long ago morning as he looks as smart as a button in his neat suit, pin down shirt collar and just the right amount of handkerchief protruding in carefully arranged disarray from his breast pocket. This is beginning to sound like a piece from "The Tailor and Cutter," magazine. I'd better press on!

Bing Crosby

BRIDGEWATER BISCUITS—"FILM STARS" (6th SERIES. 1938) BING IS NO. 42.

Again there are the usual 48 cards in the set but the price is very much higher. £72:00 the set and £1:50 for the card of your choice. All I know about this particular issue is that the cards are much the same in appearance as the previous set being small and photographic in nature once more.

OGDEN'S—"SHOTS FROM THE FILMS." (1936) BING IS NO.5

We are moving up market now and the price of this set of 50 cards is £90:00. Single cards sell at £1:80 each. You can see a reproduction of the card featuring Bing and Ethel Merman below and perhaps, like me, you are impressed by the ability of the artist involved to capture the essence of the personality of the stars as well as making their features unmistakable with a very few lines. Indeed, Bing can easily be identified even behind that massive beard which looks like the hairpiece from the, "Mississippi" card turned upside down! As far as I can make out with a magnifying glass the artist's signature at the bottom right hand of the card reads ALICK THE PICTURE. Elementary my dear Watson.

SHOTS FROM THE FILMS
A SERIES OF 50 CARICATURES

5

"ANYTHING GOES"
(Paramount)

Bing Crosby and Ethel Merman

This film is adapted from the successful Cochran show, and stars Bing Crosby. The scenes are laid aboard a transatlantic liner, and between the crooning and lavishly-staged musical numbers, deals with a series of amusing pursuits. Bing Crosby is madly infatuated with Ida Lupino, and pursues her all over the ship; in turn, he is pursued by Ethel Merman, while Charlie Ruggles (as "Public Enemy No. 13," disguised as a parson) is pursued by a persistent crowd of detectives. Finally Bing wins Ida, while Ethel Merman consoles herself with Arthur Treacher, who forsakes his usual butler rôles to appear as an English nobleman.

ISSUED BY
OGDENS
BRANCH OF THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO (OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND), LTD.

FACCHINO (chocolate) "CINEMA STARS" (1936) BING IS NO.13

This is a large set consisting of 100 cards. £55:00 for all of them while a single card will set you back to the amount of 55p. This card is illustrated herewith and we see a sepia coloured crooner giving us a rather square jawed look as if he would be willing to punch the photographer right on the button at any given moment. I wonder what he or she had just said to the young groaner?

CINEMA STARS

Series of 100 ... No. 13

BING CROSBY

Entered the theatrical profession with two others as "The Three Rhythm Boys." Short films include: "I Surrender, Dear." Others: "The Big Broadcast," "College Humour," "Too Much Harmony" and "Alice in Wonderland." Born May 2nd, 1904, Tacoma, Washington. Height 5 ft. 9 in. Blonde hair, blue eyes.

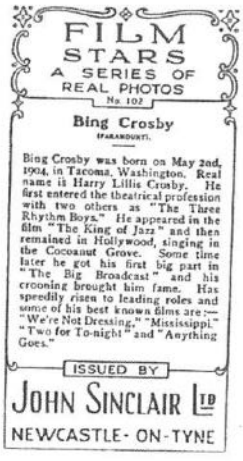
Facchino's REEL-STAR 1D CHOCOLATE WAFERS

A & M WIX — "FILM FAVOURITES." (1937) BING IS NO.62

This is a rare bird with 100 cards to collect. Unfortunately they are probably unavailable anywhere to most people. The single card carrying Bing's image is priced at £1:75 —if you can find one! .

JOHN SINCLAIR—"FILM STARS" (1937) BING IS NO.8

This is the first of a two part set and the cards are numbered from 1 to 54. The cards are all real studio portraits in black and white. £86:50 will buy you the entire pack or you can just fork out £1:60 and walk away with young Harry's photo. We have this card on show and you can see that the lad never looked more elegant in his entire life. He looks to me as if he's just finished a song and is waiting for your applause; he won't have to wait long for mine. Encore, encore!!

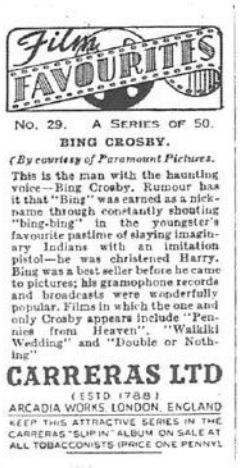

FILM STARS
A SERIES OF REAL PHOTOS
No. 102
Bing Crosby
(PARAMOUNT).
Bing Crosby was born on May 2nd, 1904, in Tacoma, Washington. Real name is Harry Lillis Crosby. He first entered the theatrical profession with two others as "The Three Rhythm Boys." He appeared in the film "The King of Jazz" and then remained in Hollywood, singing in the Cocoanut Grove. Some time later he got his first big part in "The Big Broadcast" and his crooning brought him fame. Has speedily risen to leading roles and some of his best known films are:—"We're Not Dressing," "Mississippi," "Two for To-night" and "Anything Goes."
ISSUED BY
JOHN SINCLAIR LTD
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

JOHN SINCLAIR—"FILM STARS" (1937) BING IS NO.82 & 102.

Here is the second set of real photos numbered from 55 to 108. This set is an obvious continuation of the set detailed above. Uniquely, there are two pictures of our hero in this pack which is priced at £65:00. An individual card will cost £1:20. The card I mentioned which is on show here really belongs to this half of the set and, as the set in its entirety is of a photographic nature, then the one illustration will suffice for both halves of the pack.

CARRERAS—"FILM FAVOURITES" (1938) BING IS NO.29

50 cards to collect at £1.00 each or £50:00 the set. Described on the back of this card as the man with the haunting voice which seems to me to be a very apt description of the effect Bing's singing had on me the very first time I ever heard him on a sunny day when I was a child sitting in the back garden when this wonderful voice drifted through the open window next door. Bing was singing, "The Funny Old Hills." I drove everyone mad over the ensuing weeks trying to sing the song and a few years ago a friend of those days who owned a record shop gave me a free copy of the Crosby LP that featured that particular song. He'd never forgotten the pain I caused him and my other friends! You can see the card portraying a happy looking singer on the next page.


Film FAVOURITES
No. 29. A SERIES OF 50.
BING CROSBY.
(By courtesy of Paramount Pictures.
This is the man with the haunting voice—Bing Crosby. Rumour has it that "Bing" was earned as a nick-name through constantly shouting "bing-bing" in the youngster's favourite pastime of slaying imaginary Indians with an imitation pistol—he was christened Harry. Bing was a best seller before he came to pictures; his gramophone records and broadcasts were wonderfully popular. Films in which the one and only Crosby appears include "Pennies from Heaven", "Waikiki Wedding" and "Double or Nothing"
CARRERAS LTD
(ESTD 1788)
ARCADIA WORKS LONDON, ENGLAND
KEEP THIS ATTRACTIVE SERIES IN THE CARRERAS "SLIP IN" ALBUM ON SALE AT ALL TOBACCONISTS (PRICE ONE PENNY)

CARRERAS—"FILM STARS" (Turf slides 1947) BING IS NO. 41

One of the few cigarette card sets to be issued after Hitler's war. Produced in blue and white and forming a part of the packet's slide, these cards, though sought after, are not very attractive, to my eye at least. £47.50 will buy you the set and individual cards change hands for 95p.

A & M WIX.—"FILM FAVOURITES" (THIRD SERIES 1939) BING IS NO. 70

These are quite rare cards. It is also a large set consisting of 100 cards at £90:00 the set and 90p for a single card. Beyond that I have no information and no comment to make. No cheering now!

MAX —"CINEMA CAVALCADE" (VOLUME 2.) 1940. BING IS NO. 67

The war had started when this set was issued so they are probably among the last of their kind. They are certainly quite unusual as they are produced in differing sizes. There are a very large number of cards to collect (250 at £225 the set) though a more modest 90p brings you an odd card. The example we show here brings back memories of the lobby cards that used to be displayed in cinemas long ago. Now we can see what the film looked like on the silver screen when it was crisp and new. Proof that thirties audiences didn't always see Bing through a mist.

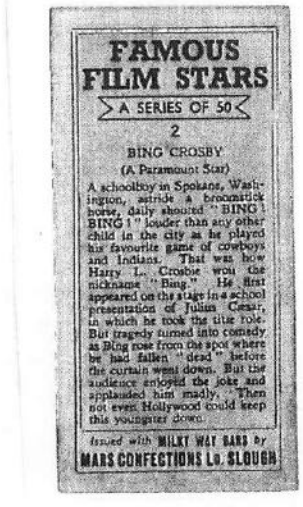
2nd Series of 250 Pictures with 30 in Full Colour.
CINEMA CAVALCADE
VOLUME II.
Tweede reeks van 250 Prentjies waarvan 30 ten volle gekleurd is.
No. 67. THE THREE GRACES.
THE BIG BROADCAST. (Courtesy of Paramount.)
Stuart Erwin, Leila Hyams and Bing Crosby represent comedy, beauty and music in one of the early musicals.
No. 67. DIE DRIE GRASIES.
THE BIG BROADCAST.
Stuart Erwin, Leila Hyams en Bing Crosby verteenwoordig komedie, skoonheid en musiek in een van die eerste musiekprente.
A beautiful book, Cinema Cavalcade, Volume II, is available to contain this series. A companion to Volume I, it has 132 pages, five superb full colour plates, a Foreword by Gabriel Pascal, and is handsomely bound in stiff covers. Obtainable for sixpence in stamps from MAX, P.O. Box 5764, Johannesburg
'n Pragtige boek, Rolprent-Skou, Deel II, waarin hierdie prentjies geplak kan word, is 'n bygaande bundel tot Deel I, en bevat 132 bladsye, vyf voortreflike volkleurplate, 'n voorrede deur Gabriel Pascal en is pragtig in stywe band omhul. Dit is verkrybaar teen betaling van ses pennies in posseëls van MAX, Posbus 5764, Johannesburg
State whether English or Afrikaans edition is preferred.
Meld asseblief of u Engelse of Afrikaanse uitgaaf verkies.
Issued with MAX Cigarettes
Uitgereik met Sigarette

R. J LEA LTD.—"FAMOUS FILM STARS" (1939) BING IS NO. 15

Another difficult pack of cards to get hold of. They consist of photographic replicas and there are 54 in the set priced at £67:50 and £1:25 for a single card.
MARS CONFECTIONS—"FAMOUS FILM STARS" (1939) BING IS NO. 2

Well, these companies certainly don't give themselves headaches in the search for different titles. I suppose there's some excuse on this occasion as the war clouds were gathering outside the window. A nice round 50 cards needed for a set here and £55:00 will purchase one for you. A single card is presently £1: 10. On this one Bing is seen reclining on the back lawn with the ubiquitous peaked cap perched rakishly on his head, the equally ubiquitous pipe clenched firmly in his jaw and old "Cindy Lou" relaxing on the young warbler's knee.

BING CROSBY

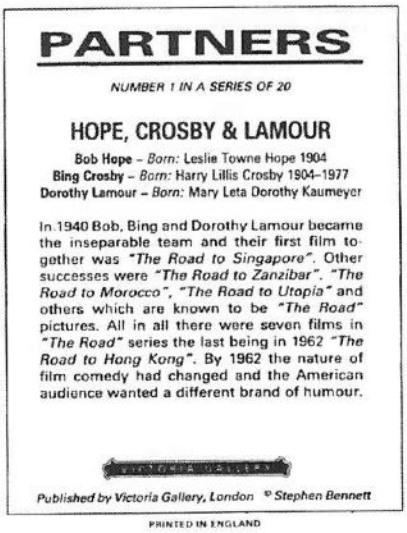

FAMOUS FILM STARS
A SERIES OF 50
2
BING CROSBY
(A Paramount Star)
A schoolboy in Spokane, Washington, astride a broomstick horse, daily shouted "BING! BING!" louder than any other child in the city as he played his favourite game of cowboys and Indians. That was how Harry L. Crosbie won the nickname "Bing." He first appeared on the stage in a school presentation of Julius Cæsar, in which he took the title role. But tragedy turned into comedy as Bing rose from the spot where he had fallen "dead" before the curtain went down. But the audience enjoyed the joke and applauded him madly. Then not even Hollywood could keep this youngster down.
Issued with MILKY WAY BARS by
MARS CONFECTIONS Ltd. SLOUGH

DINKIE PRODUCTS.— "PARAMOUNT PICTURES" (8th SERIES. 1950) BING IS NO. 19

There are 24 cards in what appears to be an unobtainable series. The cards are unusually large and only single cards are for sale. If you can find someone to sell you one he will charge you around £2:50 for it.
VICTORIA GALLERY.—"PARTNERS" (1992) BING IS NO. 12

I'm not sure if this company is still extant but over recent years they have greatly pleased collectors by issuing reprints of classic card sets while creating new issues of their own. This set is one of their own products and I recently purchased it in order to help me in the writing of this piece. I'm glad I did so because - as you can see from the illustration — it's a large and colourful set with a nice drawing of Bing, Bob and Dottie and besides, it includes pictures of many old favourites such as Astaire, Dean Martin, The Marx Brothers and many more. This one is definitely obtainable and the full set of 20 will cost you only £6:00.

BOB HOPE, DOROTHY LAMOUR & BING CROSBY


PARTNERS
NUMBER 1 IN A SERIES OF 20
HOPE, CROSBY & LAMOUR
Bob Hope – Born: Leslie Towne Hope 1904
Bing Crosby – Born: Harry Lillis Crosby 1904–1977
Dorothy Lamour – Born: Mary Leta Dorothy Kaumeyer
In 1940 Bob, Bing and Dorothy Lamour became the inseparable team and their first film together was "The Road to Singapore". Other successes were "The Road to Zanzibar", "The Road to Morocco", "The Road to Utopia" and others which are known to be "The Road" pictures. All in all there were seven films in "The Road" series the last being in 1962 "The Road to Hong Kong". By 1962 the nature of film comedy had changed and the American audience wanted a different brand of humour.
Published by Victoria Gallery, London © Stephen Bennett
PRINTED IN ENGLAND

Well, that's all there is for now. I'm told by the experts that there are many more Bing cards out there but tracing them is another matter. If you wish to try, you can contact one or both of the following.
THE LONDON CIGARETTE CARD CO. LTD
SUTTON RD., SOMERTON, SOMERSET TA11 6 QP

MURRAY CARDS INT. LTD
51, WATFORD WAY, HENDON CENTRAL LONDON NW4 3JH

There are other suppliers listed on the Internet as well.

Just to finish I would like to remind you of that unforgettable US general whose name escapes me at the moment, and of his inspiring reply when asked what the tactical thinking behind his military triumphs had been. He said, "I always likes to git there the firstest with the mostest men.!" What a lesson to us all.

Clive Menadue

(Editor: Very interesting stuff, Clive and I'll forgive you (one day!). No sooner had Clive finished his article than the following cigarette card was received from Perennial Music. They are also offering framed postcards of Bing and please see Trading Post for further details.)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR (tel. 0121-359-7399)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Crosby CDs (and LPs), contact Ray. You can do it all by phone and pay by credit card if you like. It couldn't be easier.

Kathleen Finn, 14 Redbarn Close, Bredbury, Stockport, SK6 1SG (Tel. 0161-430-7001)

Kath Finn had to dispose of her late husband's collection last year and she has now found another box containing four mint books for which she is now seeking offers. The books are:

1. Call Me Lucky - Bing's autobiography. This is autographed by Bing to Ernie Finn.
2. The Crosby Years by Ken Barnes.
3. The One and Only Bing by Bob Thomas
4. BING by Charles Thompson.

Kath also has many reel to reel tapes containing Bing material which she would like to dispose of to anyone interested. Contact Kath direct please.

Perennial Music Co. Ltd., 69 Rivington St., London EC2A 3AY (tel. 0800 5976497)

Jim Reilly gives details of several new CDs from this company in 'Keeping Track' and the company also offers framed postcards (135 x 90) of various stars, including Bing. (See opposite). The cost is £9.95 plus £2 postage and packing.

Neil Robinson, Crosby Lodge, 19 Alder Grove, Burton on Trent, DE15 9QR (Tel 01283 533845)

FOR SALE

27 - 10" LPs @ £5 each
22 - EPs @ £2 each
27 - Singles @ £1.50 each
30 - 12" Spokane LPs @ £5 each.
11 - 12" Bing's Hollywood @ £5 each
12 - 12" Limited Edition LPs @ £3 each.

Please send large SAE for lists. Callers will be welcome.

Andreas Bauer, Himmelstrasse 31, D-22299, Hamburg, Germany

FOR SALE

Dozens of Bing radio shows (e.g. Philco, Kraft, General Electric) on tape in good sound quality, also others like Jolson, Sinatra, Garland. Write for details, please enclose IRC. Also Bing on 78 rpm, beautiful 78 albums, àll in good condition! Send want-lists for records.

Larry Gunn, 1075-24 Space Park Way, Mountain View, California 94043, USA (tel. (650) 961-5591)

Larry would like to sell his collection of Bing's Paul Whiteman Victor and Columbia 78 rpm records to another Crosby collector. His collection includes 40 Victor 10-inch singles and 27 Columbia 10-inch singles, all in very good-to-excellent condition. For further details, contact Larry.

Wig Wiggins, address on inside front cover.

American / Canadian ICC members who would like to obtain copies of the British version of Bing's 1954 5-LP "Autobiography" record set should contact Wig, who can provide three complete sets in mint condition at the price of $35.00 per set, plus $5.00 postage. To order, telephone Wig at (703) 241-5608. Interested British / European members should contact Wig through Jim Reilly for further information and the price in British pounds.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

The following are available from Michael:

"Bing Crosby on Compact Disc", A5 soft bound - with details of the vast majority of Bing's CDs. An invaluable reference book. 155 pages. £10.45

"Bing Crosby - the illustrated biography" - Michael Freedland's hardback biography. Available to club members at a specially reduced price. 127 pages, £13.

"Bing Crosby - a Diary of a Lifetime" - A4 hardback, a definitive look at events in Bing's life - beautifully illustrated. 96 pages, £12.

"BING magazine" - back issues of numbers 94, 95, 101, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110, 118-122 available. £2 each.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.Kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

****

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU (phone:0121-421-7714) This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The Oct / Nov 1999 issue contains a rare full page photo of Bing from 1960. The annual sub for UK members is £12 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

The International Petula Clark Society, c/o Terry Young, 38 Elmley Way, Margate, Kent CT9 4ES

Alma Cogan Appreciation Society, c/o Stephen Woods, 9 Canterbury Avenue, Bowerham, Lancaster LA1 4AU

The Sammy Davis Jr Association, c/o Paul Iacovou, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY

International Friends of Gordon Macrae, c/o Mrs. Pat Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society, 11 Kierhill Rd., Balloch, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 9BH

Crosby Golf Tournament Merchandise

Ben Clinkenbeard sent me details of merchandise which is being offered from this year's Crosby Golf Tournament run by Kathryn Crosby. Items can be purchased from Steve Nachman c/o Sara Lee Direct, 450 Hanes Mill Rd., Winston Salem, NC 27105, USA
(e-mail steve.nachman@saraleedirect.com).

Apparently all items have the Crosby logo and prices are:

white coffee mug	$10
three pack of golf balls	$6
pewter mug	$20
golf towel	$12

folding umbrella $20
shirts, various $45
caps, various $12

Contact Steve Nachman for more details if interested.

CROONER'S LULLABY

In our last issue, we gave details of this song which appeared in the Paramount film 'Millions in the Air'. Bob Achorn indicated that the voice sounded very much like Bing's although no recognition was given of this in the film. Subsequently Bob has written again:

> *"....If I may offer a bit of additional information relating to Bing's soundtrack singing of 'Crooner's Lullaby' in the obscure 1935 film, 'Millions in the Air'.*
>
> *As I noted, the American Film Institute Catalog for the 1930s gives good space to the film but does not mention the song, or Bing, or Paul Newlan, who did the lip-synching. But it turns out there is significant documentation elsewhere for Bing's involvement. I first came across the matter in the 1993 book, 'Movie Song Catalog' by Ruth Benjamin and Arthur Rosenblatt. They credit information in their book to various music sources and to viewing of films. Further investigation reveals that Bing is listed as the singer in an edition published some years ago of 'The Motion Picture Guide', an authoritative multi-volume record of Hollywood films. The mention of Bing is matter-of-fact; nothing special is made of it.*
>
> *Currently, the comprehensive Internet Movie Database similarly identifies Bing Crosby as the soundtrack singer in 'Millions in the Air'. Again, it is the briefest possible mention...."*

Having heard a taping of the soundtrack, the voice certainly sounds like Bing but as doubts existed in my mind I played the cassette at the Leeds meeting in October. Voting by those present was that it was not Bing although this was not unanimous. Years ago, there was similar disagreement about a voice used in the cartoon 'Who Killed Cock Robin' and it looks as though we have an identical situation now with 'Crooner's Lullaby'.

Bob Achorn has indicated that there is documentary evidence that it was Bing but many Crosby fans do not agree. Also, would Paramount really have used the voice of their major star in this way without squeezing every last bit of publicity from it in order to boost audiences?

We shall be very pleased to hear from anyone who can add to the debate.

"Bing Crosby was really a good guy"

In July, The Washington Post carried a nice article about Gary Giddins, who as we know is writing what promises to be the definitive book about Bing. With grateful thanks to The Washington Post, I am reproducing the last two paragraphs of the article.

> "Giddins is now at work on a biography of Bing Crosby. There has never been a definitive work on the singer. Giddins is struck by the degree to which ordinary Americans have forgotten him. Certainly, the jazz world remembers him. But it is a testament to Giddins's catholicity that he has taken on an artist who straddles so many aspects of the entertainment world. With 250 interviews and thousands of documents behind him, Giddins is in the process of writing what is sure to be an important work of music and film history
>
> "He had a terrifying self-discipline," Giddins says of his subject. "He was alcoholic in his twenties, but stopped himself cold, He was always the first one on the movie set, had a photographic memory, and was adored by everyone who worked with him. In the main, my scoop is: Bing Crosby was a really good guy."
>
> It is a measure of Gary Giddins that he is not seduced by the margins of Crosby's story: Bing was an absentee father, a philanderer. A lesser writer would make these failures centerpieces of the life. But Bing Crosby's place in history is larger than that. When published in the fall of 2000, Giddins's biography should have its resonances, and, more likely than not, strong lessons about what it means to be American."

Pity about the negative comments in the article but thankfully they are handsomely outweighed by the positive ones and Gary's comments are a joy! I am in regular touch with Gary and I know that he has had two long conversations with Phillip Crosby. In an e-mail Gary sent me in July he told me of another interview he had just undertaken.

> *"This afternoon I interviewed Jerry Pickman, who was Paramount's head of advertising from 1950-63, and worked with Bing on all Paramount pictures from 'Riding High' to 'Anything Goes'. He really loved the guy and is furious about the badmouthing. He told me Seaton and Perlberg were afraid to ask Bing to do 'Country Girl', as he had been alcoholic and might be insulted. Also, the head of the studio wanted the project killed because he considered Odets a communist. So Pickman asked Bing and he agreed soon as he read the script. You may know that Jennifer Jones walked out a few days before shooting, but not that Joan Crawford wanted the role and was rejected."*

I love these little snippets from Gary! Incidentally, next year Gary is giving a lecture about Bing and Louis Armstrong called 'Bing and Pops: Remembrances of Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong'. The venue is the Lincoln Center, New York and the event will take place on Tuesday, May 23 at 7 p.m.. Tickets will probably be $10.

Whilst on the theme of Bing the man, I was delighted to receive a press cutting from the Globe newspaper which Charles Baillie kindly sent on to me. In this, Phillip Crosby gives us the perfect rebuttal to the negative comments made by Gary Crosby. I am reproducing this cutting on the next page and I really think that it is the best publicity we have had for years in support of our quest to tell the truth about Bing. Our grateful thanks are due to Phillip Crosby and if any of you have problems with third parties about Bing's image, just photocopy the Globe extract and give it to them. Incidentally, Phillip said just the same things when Gary's book first came out and I have a nice cutting from March 1983 confirming this which was sent to me recently by Eddie Rice.

The more I research Bing's life, the more I find that he really was an exceptionally good man. His Business Manager, Basil Grillo, has been quoted as saying that Bing was "the finest human being I ever met" and that from an employee about his employer is incredible. So it is up to us all to put down those twisted stories about Bing and set the record straight.

"It is one thing to show a man that he is in error, and another to put him in possession of truth."
(John Locke).

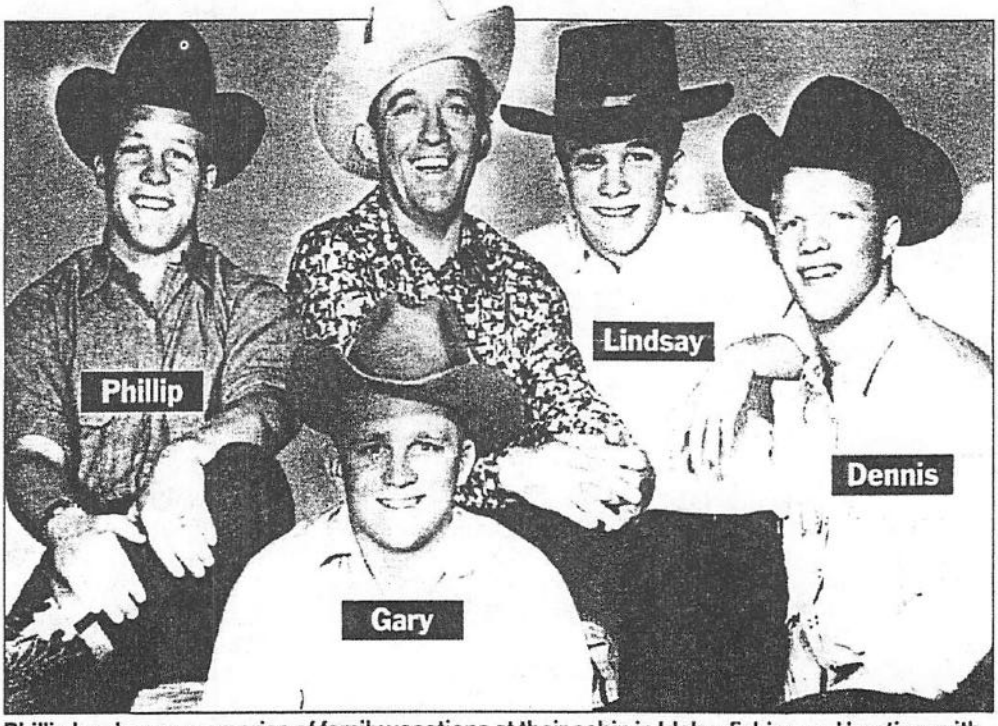
Malcolm Macfarlane

Phillip today

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

The REAL Bing Crosby

– by the son who loved him!



Phillip has happy memories of family vacations at their cabin in Idaho, fishing and boating with all his brothers and his famous dad Bing

BING CROSBY was a fantastic father – not the abusive bully his boy Gary branded him in a tell-all book, the crooner's oldest surviving son Phillip tells GLOBE in an exclusive interview.

Gary claimed in his 1983 poison-pen book Going My Own Way that Bing beat him, twins Phillip and Dennis, and Lindsay with a studded belt until they bled, taunted them and laid down strict rules he enforced with an iron fist.

But Phillip insists that's just not true.

"My dad was not the monster my lying brother said he was," protests Phillip, Bing's son by first wife Dixie.

"He was strict, but my father never beat us black and blue and my brother Gary was a vicious, no-good liar for saying so.

"I have nothing but fond memories of dad, going to studios with him, family vacations at our cabin in Idaho, boating and fishing with him."

Phillip, a nightclub singer for 40 years who's now retired and living in Woodland Hills, Calif., kept silent after the book came out. But he decided to set the record straight last month when he turned 65.

He's convinced Gary wrote his hateful book because his own attempts at becoming a star failed.

"He knew it would generate a lot of publicity and that was the only way he could get his ugly, no-talent face on television and in the newspapers," says Phillip.

"He wrote it out of greed. He wanted to make money and knew that humiliating our father and blackening his name was the only way he could do it."

Bing also came under fire from critics who say he turned his back on his first family when he died in 1977 and left the bulk of his vast $80 million fortune to his second wife Kathryn and their three kids – Harry, 41, Mary, 40, and Nathaniel, 38.

But Phillip says that's not true either. He reveals that his father was a caring dad who established a million-dollar trust fund for him and his brothers.

"My dad took care of us from a very early age with a trust fund," he says. "But we blew it all." The trust fund finally ran out in 1993.

'Dad never beat us black & blue and Gary was a vicious no-good liar for saying so'

Others have suggested that Bing's cruelty as a parent were the reasons that two of Phillip's brothers committed suicide – Lindsay in 1989 and Dennis in 1991.

"My dad wasn't to blame for their deaths," insists Phillip. "They loved him as much as I did."

Phillip didn't talk to Gary for the last 35 years of his life. And when his brother died of cancer in 1995, Phillip refused to go to his funeral.

"To my dying day, I'll hate Gary for dragging dad's name through the mud," he says.

"My dad was my hero. I loved him very much. And he loved all of us too, including Gary.

"He was a great father."

– NEIL BLINCOW

ADVERTISEMENT

STARLINE CLIENTS AT THE "HOLLYWOOD COLLECTORS AND CELEBRITIES SHOW"
OCTOBER 1999

A REPORT BY CLIVE ROBERTS

In October 1999 our Starline group once again visited this marvellous Celebrity Event in Hollywood and for most of them it was the HIGHLIGHT of the entire holiday. Many of our clients told me how much they enjoyed meeting the stars and celebrities "in person", collecting autographs and personally signed photos and, in some cases, actually having pictures taken with their favourite stars. It is the largest Celebrity Show of its kind in America and we will be there again next year on Sunday, October 8th 2000. All our Starline clients receive FREE ADMISSION to the Show.

As a special bonus this year a SKY television film crew were there to interview our clients and some of the stars. They had phoned me here in the U.K. before our departure to say they would be at the Show with their film crew and wanted me to help them arrange an interview with Mayor of Hollywood Johnny Grant and some of the stars which I did with pleasure. On the day of the Show they filmed our Starline clients as they got off the bus and did interviews with some of them. They also interviewed Starline owner Ian Bishop who told them about the history of Starline and how we specialise in "Celebrity Tours" to Hollywood and Las Vegas. They then went inside to do interviews with some of the celebrities and take shots of our Starline clients chatting with the stars.

Among the celebrities present this year were Jonathan Winters, Virginia Mayo, Stella Stevens, Carroll Baker, Carol Lynley, Anne Francis, Don Stroud, Gary Busey, Marc Lawrence, Michael Callan, Tommy Sands, John Agar, John Phillip Law, Vincent Sherman, Maud Adams, Gregory Walcott, Virginia O'Brien, Jeff Conaway, Steve Kanaly and of course many many others. There are always between 75 to 100 stars and celebrities present each year so it is quite a lavish Event.

The Mayor of Hollywood (Johnny Grant) drove me to the Show in his car and personally introduced me to several of the stars (he has known most of them for years!). Johnny and I were there both days and our Starline group attended on the Sunday. Apart from meeting all the celebrities there are many dealers offering rare and exclusive Movie Memorabilia so this is also very interesting to browse through. Johnny Grant bought Carroll Baker's book plus other Hollywood books and lobby cards from "White Christmas" - the film he made with **Bing Crosby**, Rosemary Clooney and Danny Kaye.

Talking about the Mayor of Hollywood reminds me that the day before our group arrived he hosted a "hand and footprint" ceremony at Mann's Chinese Theatre for Bob Daly and Terry Semel (Warner Bros executives) and also present were Clint Eastwood, Goldie Hawn, Dustin Hoffman, Candice Bergen, Sharon Stone and George Clooney. Our group were quite disappointed that they only missed this star studded occasion by one day but they did see Clint Eastwood and Martin Sheen at Warner Bros. during our Tour so that was some consolation!! A few of our clients saw a "Walk of Fame" ceremony a few days later (again hosted by Johnny Grant) for Kevin Spacey. Also attending were Jack Lemmon and Edward Norton. Incidentally, when Johnny Grant had his own hand and footprints put down at the Chinese Theatre he spelt his name wrong ("Johny Grant") with just one "n" so he is the only person on that famous forecourt with a name incorrectly spelt!! Check it out for yourself next time you are in Hollywood.

Our Tour next October will be extended to 15 nights (10 nights in Hollywood and 5 nights in Las Vegas), or alternatively, 15 nights in Hollywood. We are offering a visit to the SONY/MGM Studio for the first time which will include a Guided Tour, lunch in the Studio Commissary and shopping in the exclusive Studio Emporium. We will once again be offering the VIP TOUR at Universal Studios with our own private tram and personal Universal Guide which gives us the opportunity to get off the tram at various points to walk around the sets and facades. We plan to visit HOLY CROSS CEMETERY to pay our respects to some of the stars of yesteryear who are buried there including **Bing Crosby**, Fred MacMurray, Charles Boyer, Jimmy Durante, Pat O'Brien, Jackie Coogan, Bela Lugosi, John Ford, Sharon Tate, Frank Lovejoy, Mario Lanza, Rosalind Russell, Scott Brady, Edmond O'Brien, Ray Bolger and Rita Hayworth. As usual we will be visiting Warner Bros. and Paramount for "Behind the Scenes" Guided Tours and offering our fascinating Tour of Beverly Hills and the Stars Homes.
THE IDEAL HOLIDAY FOR MEMBERS OF THE BING CROSBY SOCIETY!!

For further information about these exclusive FULLY ESCORTED holidays please contact Mr Ian Bishop, 31a Montpelier Crescent, Brighton, Sussex BN1 3JL. Telephone: (01273) 324835.

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KEITH PARKINSON'S
CELLULOID CROSBY

Bing sang more Academy Award nominated songs than anyone else. Between 1936 and 1961 he had an unrivalled run of a quarter of a century when his on screen popularity was reflected in the film songs with which he was associated being contenders or winners in the annual Hollywood Oscar stakes. I want to trace the link between those film songs, the impact they had on the record buying public and the hit parade competition Bing faced when other performers knew Decca was releasing a guaranteed best seller because Bing had featured it in a movie.

Before embarking on a catalogue of Bing's "Best Song" Oscar nominations I need to set the scene as to how the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences worked when it came to selecting the songs. The first such award was given in 1935 for the best song of 1934. For that first year there were only three nominees. That quickly changed and at one time as many as fourteen songs were nominated. The system called for each studio to submit one song it felt worthy of the annual award. In the heyday of film musicals some sixty years ago it was an overcrowded game and the selectors were being faced with a formidable task. So the rules were changed. The Academy Award ceremonies we see on television these days usually feature five nominations. That's because the voting concentrates on "the five achievements ... receiving the highest number of votes which will become the nominations for final voting for the music awards."

Whatever the system, Bing was in there almost from the beginning. These are the nominated Crosby songs which impressed the Academy and the world's record buyers alike.

1936 "Pennies from Heaven" from the film of the same name was one of six nominations that year. "The Way You Look Tonight" won and Bing rated that song highly enough to record it with Dixie Lee. As far as "Pennies" was concerned it topped the hit parade for ten of its fifteen weeks chart run. For the purpose of this article all record chart placings are taken from the American magazine 'Billboard'. The hit parade competition came from Eddie Duchin (number two and nine weeks in the chart), Teddy Wilson with Billie Holiday (peaking at number three), Hal Kemp and his Orchestra (number eight), Hildegarde (sixteen) and Jimmy Dorsey (nineteen). The film was one of Bing's rare instances of playing away from Paramount Pictures. Columbia owned the rights and made sure that they squeezed mileage from the title song. Dick Haymes sang it in *Cruisin' Down the River* (1953) and it was featured the following year in *From Here to Eternity* and again in 1956 in *Picnic*. Its most bizarre on screen rendition is the Steve Martin version in the 1981 *Pennies From Heaven* which had a story far removed from the Crosby film. Martin narrates the lyrics in a way which gives them a poignancy which Arthur Johnson and Johnny Burke never imagined when they penned the song for Bing.

1937 "Sweet Leilani" won that year. *Waikiki Wedding,* from which it was taken, was not one of Bing's best films and the competition was strong in respect of the releases of 1936. On Oscar night the money was on the Gershwins' "They Can't Take That Away From Me". The story behind the writing of the song by Harry Owens is related in his 1970 autobiography. The composition was the musical high spot in Owens' life so he titled the book "Sweet Leilani: the story behind the song". He was reluctant to allow Bing to use the song in *Waikiki Wedding* but a deal was struck when it was agreed that composer royalties would go into a trust for the education of Owens' daughter, who we are told was one day old when the composer wrote the song. Then Arthur Hornblow, the film's producer, didn't care for the song. Homblow had contracted Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger to write the tunes for the film. Bing allegedly left the film set and headed for the golf course to encourage Hornblow to reconsider. The Decca recording of the song became Bing's first million seller. Like "Pennies" from a couple of years before it topped the best sellers for ten weeks but proved its staying power by remaining in the charts for a then unprecedented twenty five weeks. No cover version charted. At the Academy Award presentation Irving Berlin handed the Oscar to composer Owens, who was the first Best Song winner to have written both words and music. Berlin, of course, did not know any other way to turning out hits. He could not accept that it was sometimes necessary to share song writing royalties with a collaborator.

1940 "Only Forever" from *Rhythm on the River* lost out to "When You Wish Upon a Star" from Disney's *Pinocchio*. There were nine nominations that year. Bing's Oscar nominated song stayed at the top of "Billboard's" chart for nine of its twenty week tenure. The competition came from orchestras rather than vocalists. Tommy Dorsey had a number seven hit and Eddie Duchin made fifteenth position.

1942 This was the year of the big one. The winning song turned out to be the biggest selling Academy Award winner ever. More than that, Bing's recording has sold more copies than any other recording. It is "White Christmas" from *Holiday Inn* of course. The Decca 78 came out in August and it was topping the charts by October. It remained number one for eleven weeks. By Christmas time nearly everyone with a phonograph had bought a copy, which is why it had slipped to sixth position. During the next few years every record company made sure that a cover version was available each Christmas time to compete with Bing's recording. Restricting the competition to those artistes that made the top twenty-five, the second team comprised

Frank Sinatra, Charlie Spivak, Gordon Jenkins, Freddy Martin, Jo Stafford, Eddy Howard, Perry Como and, in the early fifties, Mantovani. For probably the last word on "White Christmas" in the 20th century see the footnote to this article.

1944 Two years later a Bing song won another statuette for "Swinging on a Star" from *Going My Way*. The inspiration for the song is attributed by composers Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen to a dinner at the Crosby's. One of the Crosby boys misbehaved and Bing told him not to behave like a mule. You know the rest. The song spent nine of its twenty eight chart weeks at number one. The competition was light with only one other version making the hit parade in the 1940s - Gray Rains spent one week in the best sellers at number twenty eight. Twenty years later Big Dee Irwin and Little Eva duetted a fun version far removed from the original arrangement which made the lower reaches of the charts.

1945 Although no Crosby song won an Oscar in 1945 it was Bing's best year with two nominated songs. "Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive" from *Here Come The Waves* was in competition with "Aren't You Glad You're You" from *The Bells of St. Mary's*. This was the year when fourteen songs were under consideration. It was too much for the selectors. From 1946 only five songs would make it through to Oscar night. The winning song in 1945 was a good one - "It Might As Well Be Spring" - but there were some forgotten "also rans". For instance, you don't hear "The Cat and the Canary" from the film *Why Girls Leave Home* on the radio very often. "Ac-cent-tchu-ate" was a Johnny Mercer / Harold Arlen composition. The story behind it could be a publicity man's fantasy, although it has a ring of truth to it. A Harlem revivalist preacher called Father Divine used the phrase quiet often and he was quoted in a newspaper clipping which came into Mercer's possession. Mercer was car sharing with Harold Arlen on the way to Paramount studios when the clipping inspired them to compose the song before the hand brake had been set on the studio lot. Arlen is on record as saying, "It must really have pleased John. It was

Bing and Sonny Tufts 'Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive' in 'Here Come the Waves'.

the first time I saw him smile." Another reason for that smile could have been because Mercer had his own number one hit with the tune. Bing and the Andrews Sisters only managed to make the number two slot. The other hit parade entries were both by bandleaders with featured vocalists. Artie Shaw made number five with Imogene Lynn taking care of the lyrics and Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge followed in twelfth place with Dolly Mitchell singing.

The other Oscar song contender, "Aren't You Glad You're You" was Burke and Van Heusen trying to rewrite "Swinging on a Star" without it being too obvious to the record buyers. But some of the public twigged what was going on and Bing's recording only reached eighth position during its nine weeks in the charts. Three other top twenty challengers were Les Brown (number eleven), Tommy Dorsey (number fourteen) and The Pied Pipers (number eighteen).

1946 Irving Berlin was back with the aptly named "You Keep Coming Back Like a Song" from *Blue Skies.* It provided Bing with his sixth and last Academy Award song of the 1940s. His Decca recording wasn't the hit version, however. Dinah Shore had three weeks in the charts, peaking at number three. Jo Stafford made eleventh place with Bing one place behind her. For the Oscar presentation Frank Sinatra was down to sing the song. He pulled out at the last minute pleading that it was from Crosby's film and therefore Crosby's song. Which is why Andy Russell delivered the vocal at the presentation ceremony. The winning song of the year was "On the Atcheson, Topeka and the Santa Fe" from *The Harvey Girls*

1951 Another winning year for a Bing film song. "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" from *Here Comes the Groom* was an up beat hit. Two of the best writers in the business, Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer, collaborated. Not that their song was written with Bing in mind. It was intended for a Betty Hutton picture for Paramount based on the life of silent film star Mabel Normand. Director Frank Capra saw its potential and it is one of the on screen and soundtrack highlights of *Here Comes the Groom.* Bing's co-star, Jane Wyman, joined him on record and their version reached number eleven during its six weeks in the top twenty. Their rivals were Frankie Laine and Jo Stafford, whose duet peaked at seventeen.

1952 "Zing a Little Zong" made it two in a row for the Crosby / Wyman partnership although this Harry Warren-Leo Robin song from *Just For You* didn't win the award. That went to "High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me)" from the film of the same name. Nor did "Zing" make the same hit parade impact as their 1951 winner. Another example of the record buyers not being fooled by a near musical clone of the previous year's winner. Bing and Jane took their record to a peak at number eighteen for its six weeks in the charts. There was no chart competition for the pair either. Someone coaxed a comment from Mss Wyman about her continuing partnership with Bing. "I think we've about had it." she said. 'We should just let it lie there". It did.

1954 The third Berlin / Crosby nominated song was "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)" from Bing's (and Paramount's) biggest grossing movie to date: *White Christmas.* It was the seventh and last song by Berlin to be an Oscar contender. Bing duetted the song on screen with Rosemary Clooney. They went their separate ways to record the song. Bing to Decca and Rosie to Columbia. By coincidence each recording peaked at number seventeen. Sales might have been stronger if their record companies had been quicker off the mark in releasing the song. As it was, RCA passed it to Eddie Fisher and his six week lead on Crosby and Clooney resulted in his version reaching number five. The winning song of the year was "Three Coins in the Fountain" from the film of the same name. The hit version was by Sinatra. In the fifties he was to the Hollywood related hit parade what Bing had been in the previous decade.

1956 "Whatever Will be, Will Be (Que Sera, Sera)" from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* won in 1956 but the Crosby linked nomination of "True Love" from *High Society* must have made selection difficult for the voters. In the USA the single made number three in the pop charts and remained on the list for thirty-one weeks. In this country there was a rush for the record companies to release cover versions to capture some of the sales action but for the record buyers the only version was by Bing (and Grace Kelly). Some of the hopefuls who had releases during the last three months of the year were Ted Heath (with Bobbie Britton providing the vocal), Kitty Kallen (on Brunswick, the Crosby label up until now), David Hughes, Ruby Murray, Eve Boswell, Margaret Whiting and Jean Campbell. What a surprise to learn that there was a dent made on the U. S. charts by Jane Powell, whose version of the song made number fifteen. To me it will always be Bing's song that carries any weight, but popular versions over the years have appeared by Elvis Presley, Richard Chamberlain (a hit in 1963 when he was riding high with the *Doctor Kildare* television series) and Red Steagall, who had a country chart hit in the States in 1973.

1960 "The Second Time Around" has become something of a standard since it was specially written for the Crosby comedy *High Time.* It didn't win. "Never on Sunday" from the film of the same name took the Oscar. But there have been far more versions of "Second Time' over the last thirty-odd years. The song was the umpteenth nomination for a Sammy Cahn / James Van Heusen song. They wrote many songs to order for Frank Sinatra and it was his version which made number fifty in the charts in the spring of 1961. And then something curious happened. Twentieth Century-Fox believed that the song had a life beyond their disappointing film *High Time.* So they made a film called *The Second Time Around* which starred Debbie Reynolds and Andy Griffith and used the song as its theme.

The history of the "Best Song" related at the beginning concerns a time when most of us went to the pictures every week. Even if you lived in a town with a modest population, chances are there would be a musical and a western playing at a town centre cinema or a second run house in the sticks. Now both genres are hard to find. This has led to situations unthinkable in the Crosby era. In 1988 there were insufficient good film songs around to make up the standard five favourites and the Academy selectors had to make do with choosing from "Let The River Run", "Calling You" and "Two Hearts". Remember them?! In 1993, to make up the five, two songs were nominated from the same film: "Streets of Philadelphia" and "Philadelphia". The first one won the Oscar that year and I'll leave you to name the film.

Bing's quarter century as singer of an Academy Award Best Song will never be matched. To be the voice behind a dozen such songs is unimaginable today. Films, singers, composers, audiences and musical tastes have altered since "The Continental" won the first Best Song Oscar in 1934. Sammy Cahn was nominated twenty-six times as lyricist. James Van Heusen notched up fourteen nominations for his music. No one today has the staying power of Bing, Jimmy or Sammy. And I don't go to the

pictures once a week anyrnore.

And back to "White Christmas". Both the song and the film are alive and well in deepest Warwickshire. Ashorne Hall, located between Stratford-upon-Avon and Leamington Spa, houses a Nickleodeon collection. As well as a cinema there is a large collection of mechanical and electrical musical entertainment exhibits. In addition to a number of conventional jukeboxes capable of playing 45s and 78s there are two video jukeboxes. I have only once seen a video jukebox. This was in a transport cafe in 1959 when for a shilling you could programme one of twenty selections and see your song being performed on a 30-inch screen. Ashorne Hall has a Scopitone model, which was in production between 1962 and 1964. One of the selections is shown as *'White Christmas"* by Bing. It turned out to be a colour clip of the song from the Paramount Picture *White Christmas.* It was complete with dialogue leading up to the singing and lasted around five minutes. The sound quality was barely acceptable and the picture quality was only so-so. It was probably an 8mm extract from the movie whereas the other selections available on the Scopitone were filmed especially to accompany each song. The Scopitone, along with other video jukeboxes in production from the late 50s through to the mid 60s, failed to find a lasting place in musical entertainment. The Nickleodeon curator cites the reluctance of record performers to be filmed miming to their songs coupled with the frequent service call-outs experienced by the jukebox renters as being responsible for the short life of these machines. Common faults were film breakages and synchronisation difficulties. The song selections were also fairly obscure. And who but an ICC member would put a bob into the slot to watch a Christmas song other than in December? But isn't it satisfying to find that this century's best selling song is being carried over into the next one on shellac, vinyl, celluloid, audio tape, compact disc, video disc and Scopitone?

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

KELLY, GRACE (1928-1982) Actress. She was Bing's leading lady in Crosby's best dramatic picture of the 1950s: *The Country Girl* (1954) and his best musical: *High Society* (1956). In the first she plays Georgie Elgin, the wife who has to cope with alcoholic husband Frank (Bing Crosby). For that part she won a best actress Academy Award and the New York Film Critics' Award. In her second Crosby film she's Tracy Lord, the girl Bing woos and wins. In both she is the cool blonde, which is what attracted director Alfred Hitchcock to her. He used her to good advantage in three of his films - *Dial M For Murder* (1954), *Rear Window* (1954) and *To Catch a Thief* (1955). For the three mid-fifties years when she was involved with either Bing or Hitch she could do no wrong. Hollywood and her fans were saddened when she married Prince Rainier and quit the movie capital for Monaco. She had met Rainier whilst working on her third Hitchcock thriller and by the time she was appearing with Bing for the second time she knew that her acting days were over. Her Hollywood career had lasted just five years. She died in a car crash when she was travelling with her daughter. Her biographers have uncovered a romance between her and Bing. As is usual where revelations of this nature are concerned, the parties involved are dead and unfortunately unavailable for comment.

KELLY, PATSY (1910-1981) Actress. She was in *Going Hollywood* (1934) where she befriended Bing's would be girl friend, played by Marion Davies. It was to become a typical role as the wisecracking friend of the heroine, where her deadpan comedy style carried her through several films after her feature debut in *Going Hollywood.* She decided to quit after making *Ladies' Day* in 1943. But when show business is in the blood it isn't as simple as that. She returned to movies with a part in the Doris Day hit *Please Don't Eat The Daisies* in 1960. The crowning glory of her career was in 1971 when a Broadway revival of *No, No, Nanette* won her a Tony award.

KENNEDY, JIMMY (1902-1984) Songwriter. When Bing sang a snatch of "South of the Border" to Cantinflas in *Pepe* (1960) we had a brief sample of the work of one of Britain's most successful songwriters. Of course, being remote from Hollywood his impact on American movies was negligible. However, if you turned on the wireless in this country during the war years, by the time the set had warmed up you were likely to hear "Hometown", "My Prayer", "We're Gonna Hang Out The Washing on the Siegfried Line" or "Lili Marlene", for which Kennedy wrote the English lyric. His connection with radio was significant in the technical sense. He wrote "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" in 1933 and the engineers at the BBC used Henry Hall's 78 recording of the song out of normal broadcasting hours to test the quality of transmissions. Kennedy's songs stopped making an impact on the popular music scene around 1960, which was the year his last hit, "Love is Like a Violin", was published.

KERN, JAMES V. (1909-1966) Screenwriter and director. Most film scholars will remember Kern for helming such forties films as *April Showers* (1948) and *Two Tickets to Broadway* (1951). Before he took on the responsibilities of director he gave up his career as a lawyer to write for the Hollywood studios. He came up with the original story for Bing's *If I Had My Way* in 1940 in collaboration with William Counselman and that film's producer director David Butler. He then fashioned the screenplay with Counselman. His work was never truly memorable and it seems appropriate that his later years were spent directing hundreds of American television shows.

KILBRIDE, PERCY (1888-1964) Actor. In *Welcome Stranger* (1947) Kilbride was Nat, the taxi driver who tells Bing (playing Dr. Jim Pearson) that Bill Walters, the drunken editor of the town's newspaper is ill. In *Riding High* (1950), Kilbride played Pop Jones, the owner of the barn that stabled Bing's racehorse. In the three years between his Crosby pictures Kilbride made the big time in a small way when he was cast as Pa Kettle, the peppery farmer in the film *The Egg and I.* Audiences took to him and Universal Pictures created a film series starring him and his female counterpart Ma Kettle, played by Marjorie Main. It seemed as though the series ran forever even though there were only half a dozen entries, ending with *Ma and Pa Kettle at Waikiki* in 1955. That series ended his

Percy Kilbride (far right) watches Doctor Bing in 'Welcome Stranger'.

acting career which had almost always seen him cast as a country bumpkin following his Hollywood debut in 1933.

KINDA PECULIAR BROWN Song. Cut from the British release print of *Dixie* (1943), never recorded for commercial release nor featured on radio by Bing, the only way you're ever going to get to hear this Johnny Burke - James Van Heusen composition is to track down a copy of Volume 8 of the Australian soundtrack LP compilation series "Going Hollywood".

KING, DAVE (1929-) British comedian / singer / actor. By the time Dave King acted in a Crosby picture his popularity had peaked. He played the part of a restaurant owner in Bing's British Road picture in 1961 when Hope and Crosby were bound for Hong Kong. Five years earlier he had a record contract with Decca which had seen him in the hit parade in fifth place with a cover version of Dean Martin's 'Memories are Made of This". That was followed by an appearance at the Royal Variety Performance in November 1956 and a bill topping fortnight at the London Palladium the following April. Then there was a regular Saturday evening BBC series, "The Dave King Show" and a 1959 guest spot on the top rated "Perry Como Show". That U. S. television showcase resulted in him being given a thirteen week series on the Kraft Music Hall which was then drawing an estimated audience of forty million. Everything seemed to be going Dave's way but very quietly his career dissolved. He signed with Pye Records and had three singles released, none of which sold at all well. He disappeared from our television screens except for the smallest of roles. I caught him in the early 1970s at a tiny theatre in Lytham-St.-Annes when he was taking the leading part in the Woody Alien comedy "Play it Again, Sam'. This might seem a lengthy entry for someone who had not much more than a bit part in a Crosby film. But listen to his recordings. He has clearly been influenced by one vocalist - Bing.

KING OF JAZZ (1930) Film. This Hollywood film gave most people their first opportunity to see what Bing looked like. Made by Universal Pictures in the expensive two-colour Technicolor process, the film itself was a no expense spared exercise when the Hollywood studios mistakenly believed that spectacle and a cast of hundreds were sufficient to entice audiences into picture palaces. As well as appearing with Harry Barris and Al Rinker as The Rhythm Boys, Bing soloed "Music Hath Charms" whilst the opening titles were on screen. The plan was to give Crosby a spot singing "Song of the Dawn". Unfortunately he was in clink when that sequence was being shot and John Boles stood in for Bing. Listen to Bing's 1930 recording of the song and you might reach the conclusion that the ballad did not suit his style anyway. *King of Jazz* is an important film in terms of Hollywood history as well as an early Bing showcase. Here are some business facts about it:

- It was Hollywood's most expensive musical to date at a cost of $1.6 million
- It made a loss of $l million
- To earn overseas revenues Universal shot 9 foreign versions

A re-edited version of the film was released in 1933 to help reduce its losses. In some areas that achieved better business than on its original showings.

KINGSFORD, WALTER (1882-1958) Character actor. In *Double or Nothing* (1937) Bing finds a wallet in the film's opening sequence. It contains the business card of solicitors Dobson and Mitchell and when Bing and colleagues confront those lawyers it is Kingsford as one half of the legal partnership who tells them what to do next. It was a typical Waiter Kingsford part. He played in well over a hundred

Hollywood films, usually as a distinguished type. He was a veteran of the London stage and his figure of authority resulted in M-G-M casting him as the hospital chief Dr. Carew when they filmed their *Doctor Kildare* series between 1938 and 1942. He was on screen for the rest of his life. His final appearance was in the Danny Kaye starrer *Merry Andrew* in the year of his death.

KINGSLEY, DOROTHY (1909-) Screenwriter. Although Bing appeared in two films for which she co-wrote the screenplays, Bing did not speak any of her lines. He had a guest shot in *Angels in the Outfield* (1951) and sang snatches of three songs to Cantinflas in *Pepe* (1960) . On radio, however, he read many other lines when he guested on Bob Hope's shows because she was one of Hope's regular writers until securing a better paid job in Hollywood. M-G-M musicals provided a showcase for her talents on lightweight feel-good musicals and she worked on hits like *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954). She suited Frank Sinatra and worked on *Pal Joey* (1957) and *Can-Can* (1960). Her last big screen credit was on the partly British musical *Half a Sixpence* in 1967. By that time the Hollywood musical was all but dead and she fashioned a second career for herself by creating the television series "Bracken's World".

KISS IN YOUR EYES, THE Song. Featured in *The Emperor Waltz* (1948), Bing sings this Johnny Burke - Richard Heuberger composition to Joan Fontaine in a romantic interlude. Burke's regular collaborator James Van Heusen did not work on the songs for *The Emperor Waltz* and the music for this ballad was originally written by Heuberger for a light opera.

KITTY CADDY Cartoon. The American trade paper "Film Daily" did not review every short cartoon but thought this one worth pointing out to potential exhibitors. They said: "hilarious golf match which is continually interrupted by reasonable facsimiles of Hope and Crosby. Above par for laughter." Released in the U. S. A. on November 6th, 1947, Columbia were still renting it to cinemas in the late 1960s.

KITTY OF COLERAINE Song. This traditional Irish folk song got Bing out of jail in *Top o' the Morning* (1949). He'd been arrested for vagrancy and managed to prove his Irish ancestry by singing the song to the police sergeant. Bing never recorded the song commercially.

KOEHLER, TED (1894-1973) Lyric writer. He provided the words for two songs originally featured in Mack Sennett shorts and forever after associated with Bing. In *One More Chance* (1931) he wrote lyrics to the Billy Moll - Harry Barris tune that produced "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams". For *Sing, Bing, Sing* in 1932, Harold Arlen, one of his regular partners, provided him with the melody for "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea". In 1934 his song *"Stormy Weather"*, written in collaboration with Arlen again, formed part of a Crosby medley in *We're Not Dressing* (1934). Bing's last on screen shot at a Koehler - Arlen song came in 1960, when a few lines from "Let's Fall in Love" were sung to Cantinflas. In 1943 Koehler stretched his talents and wrote the script for *Stormy Weather.* Many people have never forgiven him for writing "Animal Crackers in my Soup"' for Shirley Temple.

Bing tells the story of 'Kitty of Coleraine'.

Croon and punishment

This headline in the Daily Express on July 9 drew attention to the practice of the Warrawong Westfield mall in Wollongong, south of Sydney in Australia, of playing Bing's records to cut shoplifting and rowdyism. The mall managers had found that they can keep loitering gangs away from its doors by repeated playing of Bing's song 'My Heart is Taking Lessons'. This little story seemed to capture the media's interest all over the world and it was even featured on CNN and the BBC World Service. Many members sent in cuttings from their local papers. The first I knew about it was on July 8th. via a message left on my answering machine by Ron Field from Australia and within hours I was interviewed 'live' on the BBC World Service .

The presenter asked if I was amazed about the story but I said not and I told him that Bing's cheerful and pleasant voice with the deep tones had always provided escapism from the worries of the day. I quoted his tremendous popularity in the Second World War as an example. I suggested therefore that the Australian youth were being cheered up by Bing's voice and perhaps the voice reminded them of their grandparents who were no doubt fans of Bing's. These memories would undoubtedly help prevent them 'misbehaving' and they were moving on but feigning dislike of Bing as a cover. I wanted to draw a parallel with Bing's recording of 'White Christmas' being played in shops at Christmas time but the interviewer was short of time. So I merely said that "all publicity is good publicity" and that it was appropriate for the Voice of the Century who had sold over 400 million records to be in the news in 1999.

We may not have enjoyed this type of news coverage, but I'll bet that sales of Bing's CDs have increased not only in Australia but in the USA and the UK too because of the media interest. No doubt mall and supermarket owners all over the world have been keen buyers of Bing's work too! I understand that some shopping centre managers in the UK are considering using Rolf Harris records.

We don't have room to include all the press cuttings but I quite liked an article by Erik Lacitis in the Seattle Times and this is shown below with grateful thanks to the Seattle Times.

Hearing Bing sing? For teens, a real earful

Over the phone, I heard the latest version of an anti-loitering weapon that first gained publicity in the Pacific Northwest. This latest effort featured the liquid crooning of Bing Crosby, a local kid who made good.

"My heart is taking lessons, learning how to sing, every morning la la la la la la la la la . ." Bing sang in this 1938 tune, violins in the background, the entire 2 minutes 46 seconds a very easy-going, very mellow, very soothing, very ... excuse me, do you mind if I get another caffeinated Diet Coke?

Stephanie Plowman, a helpful special-collections librarian at Gonzaga University in Spokane, had dug into the school's Bing Crosby archives and found a CD with this particular tune. Bing, who was born in Tacoma and received an honorary doctorate from Gonzaga, was always fond of his alma mater. I asked to hear "My Heart Is Taking Lessons" because it is being played over and over again at an Australian shopping mall that's having problems with teenage loiterers. Bing sings, the adolescent malingerers leave, and the middle-agers can shop in peace.

Wig Wiggins, the American representative of the International Crosby Circle, a fan club, told me he was befuddled about why that tune drove teens away. "It's not a bad little song. It's very pleasant," he said. Exactly the point. One of the teens was quoted by the Daily Telegraph in Sydney: "All the people from Warrawong High used to hang here after school - now you don't see them."

I would guess that a considerable portion of the 2,000-plus Bing recordings would drive away your typical 1990s teen. Myself, I can be sent into considerable distress by Bing's version of "White Christmas." Actually, any version. Still, if your typical teen knew a bit about Bing, he'd consider Bing a pretty cool guy. Bing made lots of records, lots of movies, lots of money, didn't take guff from anybody, died in 1977 on a golf course in Spain. He is cool enough so that a Gap commercial, showing a bunch of young types dancing, included Bing's singing, although it was spliced together like a rap song.

But the original, unspliced, often-violinated Bing music is, of course, rather unhurried. If... you ... are ... a ... loitering ... teen ... it ... calms ... you ... down ... and ... makes ... you ... want ... to ... leave ... and ... take ... a ... nap. The violins are the key.

In 1990, the Pacific Northwest gained some publicity when selected 7-Elevens began piping music into their parking lots. The 7-Elevens knew that a potential customer, seeing your average congregation of youths and cars and hearing really loud heavy-metal music, would decide to purchase his potato chips elsewhere. Back then, I interviewed Ron Conlin, loss-prevention manager for this region's 7-Elevens, which then numbered 300. Now there are 500. Conlin told me teens tried to fight the anti-loitering music - such titles as "Mantovani's Golden Hits" and "Brahms' Lullaby" - by cranking up their car stereos and boom boxes.

"The thing is, no matter if they're playing rap or heavy metal, that Mozart will seep through," he explained. Conlin still has the same job with the 7-Elevens, and the stores still use anti-loitering music, although only in a handful of outlets. These days, however, it's all become more sophisticated. A portable sound system is brought in, including a satellite dish that receives a fine selection of such genres as "telephone music-on-hold." This being the Intemet age, innovative anti-loitering ideas get passed around the Internet by loss-prevention managers. Somebody in Australia decided that Bing singing "la la la la la la" would be a real crime stopper. Next on the local cops' anti-loitering agenda in the New South Wales region? Using pink lighting to highlight pimples on kids' faces.

Is there an ACLU in Australia? Using Bing Crosby is tough enough, but pink lighting? I think that's inching pretty close to police abuse.

Erik Lacitis / Times Staff Columnist

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Ben Clinkenbeard, 5475 Woodhaven Drive, Cinti, OH 45248, USA

Wig wanted me to pass along some information on a video that was mentioned in 'Celluloid Crosby' BING 121. He feels that many people may not have responded to the ad that was included. I am making reference to the 'Around the World in Technicolor' travel log video. I called the number listed and left my info on a recorder and about two weeks later received the video. This apparently was a television show that his production company was involved in. I believe it was from the mid to late 1950s. The hostess of the program does about a 3-minute interview with Bing from his Baja home in Las Cruces. Of course it's in color and Bing is wearing a skipper hat similar to the one from 'High Society' and smoking a rather long stemmed pipe. He talks about the construction of his home, the hunting, and the general area. The segment ends with him giving the hostess a banana from his prized banana tree. I recall the ad saying "see a cranky Bing Crosby give a tour of his Baja home" - he does not appear cranky, but one might get the feeling that he feels obligated to do it because of his involvement with the program. Overall it is well worth the price.

(Editor: Thanks very much Ben for the information and by chance the extract from the video was shown at our Leeds meeting. I agree with you entirely.)

Girvan Patterson, 1/11 Monash St., East Bentleigh 3165, Victoria, Australia.

Thought you might like to see this little article from a Melbourne newspaper recently. This looks most promising, a tribute shown about Bing in January 2000? What a great way to launch Bing into the 21st century! Let's hope it comes off and let's hope it's televised or video taped for release.

As you are no doubt aware there have been several 'polls' printed in the media lately of this century's greatest SINGER / PERFORMER / ENTERTAINER etc. Bing has not fared too well in most of these, the most recent one published here of the so called 'Stars of the Century' had John Lennon as No. 1 in the top 25 and Bing not even rating a place. To me none of these polls are credible and I'll explain why.

If polls were taken around the half way point in this century (1950 - 52) and they may have been, Bing would have won hands down as the No. 1 singer of the first half of the 20th. century, not many people could dispute that. How then can you have a poll on the greatest of the century now, without including the man who was undisputed No. 1 for the first half of the century. Answer - you can't! Bing would have to be in the top 2 or 3, otherwise you are not including half of the century. If my theory is not correct, then would somebody please explain why.....

FRONT ROW

▶ PALZ VAUGHAN

Crosby **tribute**

WORD has got out that Broadway star Carol Lawrence will be a special guest at Spray Farm next year.

Lawrence, who has a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, will perform in *Bing Crosby — The Man and the Music Swing Again*, in January.

She regularly performed with Crosby in the 1960s at the famous Radio City Music Hall.

Lawrence is said to be looking forward to paying tribute to Crosby and no doubt we can look forward to hearing a few anecdotes.

Have you heard the one about Dean Martin arriving at a Crosby rehearsal at 11am to find it had been called for 8am?

"Who the bloody hell organised a rehearsal at 8am?" said Martin, the lover of the night-life and the high life.

"I did," said the golf-mad Bing.

It seems that a "swinging club" held completely different meaning for each of them.

Bing in the 21st. Century? It's an exciting thought and I suppose the challenge for the ICC and indeed all Crosby clubs and fans is to keep plugging away at getting all Bing's gigantic audio and video legacy onto the state of the art technology, not just to make it available, but to ensure its survival for all of the next century and beyond. The current 'state of the art' for the foreseeable future appears to be CD for audio and DVD for video. Much of Bing's recorded legacy is on CD already and 3 or 4 of his better known films are on DVD, so at least it's a start.

The ICC's BING magazine, a glossy masterpiece, is a credit to all concerned, and more importantly, a credit to the man who single handedly kickstarted the whole Pop industry, Bing Crosby.

(Editor: A great letter from Girvan and I had to smile at the mention of Carol Lawrence regularly performing with Bing at the famous Radio City Music Hall in the 1960s. Complete fiction! However Carol did appear with Bing in a couple of TV specials in 1960 and 1961. We look forward to learning more about the proposed show.

Girvan makes an excellent point about the various polls we have seen in recent months. Sadly the last two generations are almost completely unaware of Bing's impact earlier in the century. Over 320 top 20 hits, sales of over 400 million records, the top selling record ever, top film box office star for five successive years, nominated three times for the Oscar as Best Actor, star of the top rated musical radio programme and so on. One poll that amazed me and also Gord Atkinson was

the American Film Institute's list of the '50 Greatest Screen Legends' and incredibly Bing was missing from the list. Gord fired off a magnificent letter and he makes the point that we should all make our voices heard otherwise Bing will be forgotten. So many members do 'have a go' and I am thinking of people like Maggie Ryan, Ernie Sutkowski, Trevor Wagstaff, Stan White and many more. Keep up the good work. We are making progress!)

George Patmore, 53 Severn Way, Cressage, Shropshire SY5 6DS

For those members interested in mention of Bing in novels, I have recently read a book entitled "A Half Baked Life - My Story So far" by Claude Jenks. The references, fictional, to Bing can be found on pages 121 -125 inclusive where the character meets 'Bing Crosby' in a golf club and chats with him with 'Bing' replying in typical Bing vocabulary. (The author must be fairly conversant with Bing's background because of the speech mannerisms and reference to "winging years" / "wingy ears" etc.)

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA

BING 121 seems to have been acclaimed by members of the ICC as the best yet, and at that point I am sure they were right, however, I have no doubt at all that 122 now takes the Crown.

The colour cover of BING 122 is eye catching and excellent in every way, the picture of Bing is superb, and I have to say that I prefer shots of him taken at that period of his life. The back cover colour photograph is of special interest when you study the expression on the faces of Bob and Bing, I wonder what was being said. "Have I really got to wear these" (Bob) !

Photographs and contents within the magazine are all first class, there really is some good reading. Also, Dixie Crosby Goodwin, really does have the Bing looks, especially around the eyes. I recall that Larry Crosby, who was the world expert at writing a letter in one or two lines, did look like his Dad, Bing and Bob's looks were probably more from their mother!

Regarding colour photographs of Bing for the cover, a possible way for the future when Ron has eventually run out of good colour photos, might be to choose excellent black and white photographs, and have them coloured by computer by a professional. Or by hand, many good examples of these methods now appear on CDs, for instance, "Bing Crosby - The Voice Of Christmas", and indeed. "Memories", with the photo lifted from a German MCA LP sleeve, with a black & white photograph which had been coloured. In fact, that shot reproduced from the original MCA LP sleeve, would be ideal for an issue of BING. It is a publicity shot not owned by MCA or any other record company. Not that Universal/MCA would object to its use after all of the photographs they have been supplied with from ICC sources, and from ICC members. I still think that the 1940 Universal Pictures publicity photo used at the front of the Diary, would make an ideal cover picture for BING, given a colouring job. It works well enough for the Bing Stamps, so that a digitally enhanced colour job would be ideal for such use.

There is one point that I must make, not that it is of paramount importance. I do supply CDs (often purchased by Ernie) to BBC National Radio programmes and presenters: Desmond Carrington; David Jacobs; Russell Davies, and his Producer - Roy Oakshott. Roy is a Bing enthusiast and one of the unsung Bing experts. Maggie Ryan also looks after Hubert Gregg for National Radio, and many regional network presenters, as I also do. National, Regional or just a lone Local Station, they are all important in the Bing cause.

Gord Atkinson certainly seems to enjoy the song "At My Time Of Life", perhaps he would be interested in the correspondence in recent months with Harry Crosby asking Alan Fisher of the whereabouts of Hal Shaper, who wrote the words of the song, Cyril Ornadel having composed the music. Hal was very grateful to Keith Skues and others for finding him in South Africa, equally Hal was delighted with the United Artists Sessions CDs, which I sent to him, containing his songs, as above, and "Children".

Roger Addey, Swallowdale, 17 Tehidy Gardens, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 0ET

A few weeks ago I was lucky enough to watch a video of the US PGA golf tournament, courtesy of a friend who has Sky TV. Having done so, I was pleasantly surprised by the ending of the programme, as, guess who started to sing? Why Bing and Bob of course! This had obviously been specially put together, as the song played was 'Chicago Style' (the PGA was played near there) and as the words of the song progressed, so odd items were shown, i.e. shirts, socks, shoes, and others which I can't recall now. Did you see it, or know anyone who may have done? I wondered if Mr. Wiggins had been busy again on Bing's behalf or perhaps Bert Bishop is a golf fan.

The magazine continues to be excellent, and I wish you all good wishes for Leeds this year, but I'm only sorry that I will not be able to attend.

(Editor: I didn't see the PGA coverage myself but how nice that Bing and Bob were featured this way. Anyone know the background?)

Keith Parkinson, Meadowcroft, Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St. Helens WA10 5LD

When I was a lad you could buy two types of potato crisps. Those with salt and those without. The ones without were a mistake anyhow. Smiths had a faulty packing machine which missed the little blue salt bag out of every fiftieth pack. I remember having more than my fair share of salt free bags. Can you imagine the disappointment at opening a crisp bag and finding no salt? It's a similar experience to opening a copy of BING and find no Lionel Pairpoint article. I expect a double length piece in the Winter issue.

Your editorial refers to some Bing TV and radio programmes in the course of preparation. You were probably contacted by Channel 4 about their 90 minute programme planned for Christmas Eve which intends to cover this century's Christmas hits. I had a few discussions about 'White Christmas'. The plan is to devote 8 minutes to the song and the producer was looking for ways of featuring it built around Crosby anecdotes. I supplied

enough info for about half an hour but I'd still like to bet that the proposed 8 minutes is pared down.

John Bignell asked if there were any other vocal recordings of "South Rampart Street Parade". I've a pretty good version by Eydie Gorme on a World Record Club album (T585 Eydie in Dixieland) which is probably a re-issue of a Capitol album.

When we spoke a couple of weeks ago I mentioned that Kath was about to return to the Spinal Injuries Unit at Southport Infirmary. She's there at the moment for a follow up to last years operation. This means that Leeds will be out for me again this year. It's a big disappointment because I would have liked to make a judgement on "Crooner's Lullaby".

Issue 122 met your usual high standard.

(Editor: Well, Lionel's back to the delight of us all and I do like Keith's analogy with a bag of salt! I wasn't contacted by Channel 4 so our thanks are due to Keith for his work with them. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing Kath Parkinson a full recovery from her serious injuries.)

Clive Menadue, 5 Helig Fan, Kenfig Hill, Bridgend CF33 6BT

Having been the cause of some small controversy a year or two ago I felt myself instinctively ducking as the angry missiles flew around our Editor's head in the Summer edition of BING. Even after my own experience of the anger of some BING readers when they felt the line of their tolerance had been crossed, I still find myself feeling utterly surprised at the sheer intensity of feeling aroused in the breasts of some members at the publication of any slur on the character of our favourite crooner.

I suppose that it has always been obvious to all of us that "Bing" Crosby could never be accused of doing anything underhand or unseemly as he was in fact a creation of film and radio scriptwriters and was perfected by the genius of the man who provided the basics of the finished character; I mean of course Harry Lillis Crosby. "Bing" only ever existed as a "Perfect" character when he was fully scripted and directed. Harry Lillis had his being — like the rest of us— in the real and more unpleasant world. Now before nervous tics develop on a few eyelids and shaking hands twitch over revolvers, let me say that I never believed the bulk of the scurrilous and muck raking articles that appeared about Harry Lillis over the years. Here was a man who had the entire world at his feet for a couple of decades. Adored by millions and with a fortune in his pocket plus being surrounded by bevies of beautiful and available women— what did this EVIL man do?

Well, let's see. He played a lot of golf. He bought, sold and ran race horses. He raised enormous amounts of money for his church, for charity and for the war effort. I'm sorry to parade this catalogue of crime before you but I'm afraid there's more! Harry sometimes chastised his children and wasn't always at home when perhaps he might have been. Can you believe the way this man treated his wife? At a time in America when many thousands of men and women were homeless and spent their days scrabbling for a little shelter and food, this truly despicable man provided Dixie Lee with a large beautifully furnished home where she could bring up her children with the aid of a number of servants and in her plentiful spare time, shop until she dropped with her many friends. Much has been made of this dreadful fate that Harry imposed on her and I'm sure that the many female readers of BING will be grateful that such an awful life was never imposed upon them!

Harry also hunted animals because doing so was an integral part of the culture from which he came. I personally wish he hadn't done that but life is not perfect and the perfect human being has yet to be born. Harry Lillis Crosby was not Father O'Malley, but he was — in my opinion- a perfectly decent and reasonable human being and we should be ever grateful to him for presenting us with his alter ego "Bing" who was everything we could have wished for as a screen hero and who was also blessed with a beautiful voice.

Many of us in the 'Circle' are fascinated by all of the many facets that the old groaner presented to us during his long career and if censorship is to be imposed upon the items appearing in our magazine, I would suggest that those who desire it should impose self censorship on those items they feel might upset them.

After the initial shock I felt when I first read "The Hollow Man" I must say that I soon became engrossed in a book about the life and times of H. L Crosby that was not cliché ridden and flabby with much repeated and warmed over facts. Events of importance were recorded in detail and many more people were interviewed so that the grit and grime of backstage life began to balance the usual glitter and glamour. In fact, had Shepherd and Slatzer not been so intent on sniffing out crime and corruption in order to create a sensational book they might have published the definitive and lasting record of a unique man and his life and times.

Our Editor proved perfectly able to defend himself in the last issue of our magazine so I'll content myself by echoing some points made by Margaret Otway in that same edition by congratulating not only Malcolm but also the team of regulars who give up their time to produce BING magazine and who offer us an unprecedented array of articles and information about Mr. Crosby. So when people criticise Bing in the future I hope that Malcolm will feel free to show us their faces and the size and weight of their bullets so that we can all fire right back with interest. Anyway, who cares about these little creatures who try to snip away around the edges of a great talent? After a brief moment in the limelight they will pass like shadows into the undistinguished darkness while Bing's genius will continue to reverberate long past the end of the century which he graced so effortlessly.

I would just like now to wish you each and every one, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year and finally to quote from a line by Bob Hope which appeared in "Road to Morocco"—

I ain't lookin' for trouble, but if trouble comes a-lookin' fer me- -I'm gonna be mighty hard to find!

(Editor: Some slightly controversial views from Clive which are perhaps pertinent in considering the future shape of the magazine. We have shied away from being a 'fanzine' and have always tried to encourage reasonable debate about the man that unites us all. Should this continue? There has always been fascination about Bing the man and Stan White

recently sent me a 1960 cutting from the Dublin published 'Radio and TV Review' in which Danny Kaye considers the enigma of Bing. I am reproducing this below with grateful thanks to Radio and TV Review. Incidentally, Stan was a regular contributor to the magazine at the time and he used to share a page with Marion Ryan She wrote about show business and Stan covered the theatre / electronic organ scene.)

The Man NOBODY Knows...

Bing Crosby, seen here enjoying one of his favourite forms of relaxation, is expected in England later this month en route for the Olympic Games, after which he is scheduled to visit Dublin for film work.

What I Think Of Bing Crosby

By DANNY KAYE

BING CROSBY is probably the best-known and best-liked man in the world to-day. I read somewhere that this voice has been heard by more people than that of any man who ever lived.

He has been seen in countless motion pictures. For more years than he will admit, his voice has been heard by millions of radio listeners.

Millions of words have been written about him. And now he is being seen by millions more people on television.

Almost everybody in the world thinks of Bing Crosby as a personal friend. So now I am asked to write "what I think about Bing Crosby."

This is comparable to asking me to write "what I think about my brother." Everybody in the world knows Bing Crosby as well as I do, probably better—they think.

So, no matter what I write, at least a couple of million people are going to say—"Aw go on! What do you know about Bing? He's not like that at all!"

The real truth is that everybody knows Bing, but nobody knows him.

Real Truth

Through the years he has created a legendary character so vivid that no one knows where the legend begins and the real Crosby leaves off.

I thought I knew Bing, thought I knew all about him until we started to make "White Christmas." Then I realised I actually did not know the man at all.

For example, everyone thinks of Bing as lazy. It is good to think of him as lazy. It makes a man feel good to say to himself, "Well, all right, so I'm lazy. So is Bing Crosby—and look where he is to-day."

Hard Worker

The truth of the matter is, there isn't a lazy bone in Bing's body. He works harder than any man I've met, but he does it with an easy casualness that makes him look lazy.

Some of the routines Bing and I did were as tough as anything I have ever done. Not once, though, did I see him miss a rehearsal or say—"Let's take a break."

Usually it was I who said—"MAN LET'S SIT THIS ONE OUT FOR A WHILE, I'M TIRED."

But the strange thing is, no matter how strenuous the routine was, when Bing Crosby finally did it, it somehow had the feeling that it was impromptu, that he could do routines like it without rehearsing, or working. He has one of the most amazing talents I have ever seen for making hard work look easy.

Not Aloof

Another portion of the Bing Crosby legend is the belief that Bing is aloof and a guy who likes to be by himself.

I guess the fact that he does not show up at Hollywood parties and hardly ever is seen at the night clubs has given rise to this part of the Crosby legend.

To my surprise, I discovered him to be one of the most gregarious of individuals. He had a dressing-room, but he only used it to change clothes. Between scenes he likes to sit on the set with the rest of the boys and girls making the picture.

Yes, I thought I knew all about Bing Crosby — until I got to know him.

NOW I HAVE TO ADMIT I'VE ONLY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE OF A REMARKABLE PERSONALITY.

The Songs of Bing Crosby on Compact Disc - Supplement 1

Members will recall that Jim Reilly published the first ever listing of Bing's CDs in 1996 and this has proved an invaluable aid to all of us. With a constant steam of new CDs coming through, Jim has now prepared a supplement giving full details of the CDs issued since 1996. There are three main sections, 1. An alphabetical listing of the CDs issued since 1996, 2. An alphabetical list of the song titles on these CDs and 3. the contents of each CD. Most helpfully, Jim's supplement has an appendix which contains a full list of all known Bing CDs with the new ones highlighted in bold print. So at a glance, reference can be made to this list and one knows whether to look in the supplement or the original book for full details. Running to 64 pages in A5 size, the supplement is bound in a nice cover bearing pictures of 16 of the new CDs and has been printed by Michael O'Toole's company, Printcomp . A very nice addition to our stable of ICC publications, copies can be obtained from Jim or Wig, price £6.99 or $15.

LIONEL'S LINES

"IF I KNOW'D I WAS GONNA LIVE DIS LONG, I'DA TAKEN BETTER CARE OF MYSELT"

Hello. It's me. I'm back again - in response to the letter. Contrary to what you may have heard, I was advised that my article would not be required for the Summer issue of this magazine, as a large amount of column space had already been earmarked in order to display our Editor's holiday snaps. (He knows I'm only joking. If I happened to be one of those people who had an imaginary friend, he would be my first choice). But I know it's not just imagination when I say that certain members of the "Management Team" are intent on making life, uncomfortable, for your humble correspondent. What you don't know is, that for a long time now, I have been actively campaigning for a bouncy castle at the Annual Leeds Dinner. I strongly suspect that, last October, "vote rigging" was instrumental in depriving guests of this inexpensive, extra pleasure but you can bet your boots that as soon as they're rid of me, someone will come up with this "fun" idea, claiming it as their own.

On top of all this, I have not been very well lately and thought it might be opportune to spend some quality time with the doctor. I am here to tell you, that the old place has changed beyond recognition. There has been a move into a shining, new group practice, next to the library (handy for cribbing from Gray's Anatomy or Black's Medical Dictionary). Gone, are the green walls, the faded linoleum and the formica table, supporting pre-war copies of "Illustrated" and "Passing Show" with the new waiting room now resembling a cross between a space station and a tropical rain forest.

Having undergone a rigorous identification procedure and a barrage of extremely personal questions from a quintet of grim-faced ladies, I hacked my way through the undergrowth to a posturally correct, chrome contraption, probably thrown out from Pizza Hut, situated between a clump of Spineless Yucca and a young man with spiky, yellow hair. The reading matter hadn't changed and becoming bored with, "How I Conquered My Stutter" (Reader's Digest circa 1967), I amused myself by attempting to diagnose the problems of my closest neighbours, coming to the conclusion that the yucca had a bad case of mealy bug and that the youth had obviously, made the mistake of shampooing with custard. However, I must admit to being unable to guess, what bizarre accident had left him with his eyebrows riveted to his forehead.

Having agreed to see "any doctor", I beat both the punk and the plant to the consulting room where I was greeted by a fresh faced, post-adolescent, in a rugby shirt and cargo pants. I was immediately, on my guard, because my kind of doctor has grizzled hair, a nicotine-stained moustache, a soiled waistcoat and only requires a cursory glance at one's tongue, to diagnose all ailments. I am no stranger to the world of medicine. My body is a mass of scar tissue and an (almost) living, testimony to previous encounters with the profession. I mastered, "sphygmomanometer" and "actinomycosis" before I learned how to pronounce "Douwe Egberts" or "Haagen-Dasz" but this chap tut-tutted his way around my torso with a variety of instruments and meters which were entirely new to me.

Obviously, playing for time, he launched into a short treatise on "fitness" and "diet". My eyes glazed over, as I come from a time when "racquet sports" and "endurance exercise" were not things a working man cared to contemplate when he came home after a day's toil and was more than thankful to sit down to a large dish of assorted calories. It was clear that my condition had baffled him, but of course, this did not prevent him from scribbling out a prescription which still sits on the mantelpiece and appears to be for "corn plasters".

"I was hoping one of us would know"

Physicians have been around for several thousand years and patients, somewhat longer but medicine still seems to be the most inexact of the sciences. The most startling advance that I have observed, is marking the site of where they intend to excavate, in advance, with a coloured felt tip. I recall, years ago, during my first brush with surgery, drowsy from the pre-med, being wheeled into the operating theatre where the surgeon asked me to confirm on which side was my problem. I was just able to feebly wisecrack, "I was hoping one of us would know" before descending into oblivion.

Which reminds me that I am going to tell you something of a singer's background - an unmistakable voice, early jazz roots, embraced radio in the early thirties, sang with Paul Whiteman, Hollywood films, good Catholic, married twice, first wife had drink problems and died comparatively young. Second wife, thirty years, his junior. Stayed with radio until the Fifties, then found a new career in television. Hosted the Hollywood Palace. Strong associations with Del Mar racetrack. Duets with Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Al Jolson, Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra etc. Recorded songs include, "Try A Little Tenderness"; "When I Lost You", "I'll Be Seeing You", "September Song", "Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep" etc.

It would not be surprising if these coincidental parallels failed to assist you in identifying a man whose singing style was as alien to Bing Crosby's, as Gregorian chant would be, to the Beach Boys.

I suppose that I first encountered Jimmy Durante, strutting through the pages of "Film Fun", muttering, "Boy, Oh, Boy! Am I mortified" or "Hot cha cha", in alternate frames. I have clouded memories of my first awareness of him at the cinema, dressed in a sailor suit, which may have been when he provided the comic relief in the MGM drama, "Hell Below" but my clearest

recollections are from May 1952 when he starred with Eddie Jackson, at the London Palladium, lingering in my memory as the greatest vaudeville act that I had ever seen.

A propensity for mangling the English language, stern reprimand, coy whimsicality and a collapse into helpless laughter at some intricacy of the script were his trade marks. A battery of "one liners" acknowledged Bing as his only real "rival" and a focal point for many of his gags about singing and singers - "How long can that Crosby last?"; "Dat note was given to me by Bing Crosby and boy, was he glad to get rid of it!" ; "If you're listening, Crosby - start packin'!"; "I'm ignoring you, Crosby and when I ignore a man, he's being ignored by a real ignoramus". The classicists took no offence at the uncalculated "put downs" posed by his mispronunciations and "Joe Eyeturbi", "Laurence Melicure", "Eezo Pinzeroo", all came back for more.

In spite of these apparent insults and discourtesies, biographers are unanimous in their portraiture of an inherently good and gentle man. The "warmest man in the World" was a pushover for practical jokers and an easy mark for the hard luck stories of the panhandlers and moochers who loitered at the stage door. Bob Hope ("da comedian wid da odd-shaped nose - a ghastly thing!"), wrote that Durante, "makes you think he's having more fun than anybody else". Bing Crosby, together with many others, is quoted as having loved working with Jimmy and we are about to investigate, where their careers overlapped.

Bing visits Jimmy on the set of 'The Phantom President'

In 1932, at Paramount, Jimmy starred with George M. Cohan and Claudette Colbert in the political satire, "The Phantom President" In spite of a score by Rodgers and Hart and high praise for Durante's performance, the film committed Hollywood's cardinal sin of grossing less than it cost to make but at the time, a photograph of Bing, visiting the set, was published, sparking the rumour that he would be appearing in this movie. You are now invited to identify the only film which featured both the "Groaner" and the "Schnozz", much later in their careers. No peeking and no prizes!

The first radio association with Bing that can be traced is December 1935 when they both had spots on the broadcast, hosted by Al Jolson, celebrating the opening of NBC's Hollywood Radio Studios. Bing's rendition of "On Treasure Island" has been mentioned before in these columns. Schnozzle's contribution was cut in from New York where he was appearing with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, in Rodgers & Hart's, "Jumbo" . He was heard singing, "Laugh" from the show and contrary to expectations, he experienced little difficulty with Lorenz Hart's lyrics which include such notorious Durante stumbling blocks as "catastrophic" and "philanthropic"

The first genuine "face to face" seems to have occurred on Command Performance No. 81, in August 1943, when Bing muscles in on Jimmy for, "Inka Dinka Doo", only to receive the admonishment, "My number, Mister Crosby" to which Bing offers an apologetic, "Sorry, I was carried away". Jimmy was featured on, at least, seven of these programmes with Bing, the most significant being the hour-long "Dick Tracy In B Flat" where he played arch villain, "The Mole" to Crosby's portrayal of the comic paper detective. He turned up on Mail Call No. 91, offering a unique experience in a vocal trio of Crosby, Garland and Durante, guying themselves with a number entitled, "The Groaner, The Canary And The Nose" They also appeared together in three G.I. Journals. In two, consecutive, programmes, Jimmy plays the Journal's "roving reporter" to Bing's "editor in chief" and both shows have them joining in parodied versions of "Mr. Gallagher & Mr. Shean." On G.I. Journal No. 69, in a short sketch penned by "Umbriago", in which genders are reversed, he plays daughter, "Hyacinth" to Bing's, "Mother" and Joan Blondell's ," Father".

As Jimmy himself might have said, "the pinochle" of their radio alliances was the Philco Radio Time series and the five shows on which he guested are sheer joy for the connoisseur of both styles. The first of these was on 4th December 1946 and there is momentary shock, when, prepared for Crosby, the listener hears another familiar voice crooning, "When da blue of da night meets da gold..." until the genuine article steps in to rescue his reputation with, "...someone waits for me". Later, Jimmy launches into, "You Gotta Start Off Each Day With A Song", while Bing subs for Eddie Jackson with the time honoured interjections, "Oh! Sing it Jimmy boy - Sing it for the hoi polloi " and "Oh! Boy, you're singing now - Jimmy you're a wow!" A formal introduction to pianist, Skitch Henderson, produces the inevitable dyslexic rejoinder - "Hello, Stitch.." Dis boy's a blonde Adronis" and when Bing comments that, "Crooner's are a dime a dozen", Durante asks the very pertinent question, "Just when did da price go up?" . The show's finale has host

and guest, "exchanging" songs - "I Surrender Dear" and "I'm Crosby That Well Dressed Man", ending with a duet of "Blue Skies".

Four months later, on the 16th April, Bing played the straight man (unable to resist laughter) for, "The Song's Gotta Come from The Heart", joining the inimitable, Durante interludes of, "Parlez-Moi D'Amour" and "Otchi Tchorniya". When questioned by Jimmy regarding his interpretation of the lyrics he admits to "ad-libbing", earning the critical rebuke, "Please ad-lib on your own time".

In Bing's own words, Durante, "Jets in on a self-made zephyr" for the second show of the new, 1947/48 season for Philco Radio Time and undertakes another rendition of "Where The Blue Of The Night". "Bingo" is found guilty of echoing each of the maestro's phrases, this time incurring the warning, "Mr. Crosby, I wish you'd develop a style of your own!" and to the delight of the audience, guffaws from Bing and helpless giggling from the culprit, Jimmy "fluffs" his way through the "intrigracies" of the lines provided by the scriptwriters, pausing only to add his own comments, "Wait a minute, he's gotta get this line before he can talk!" The main topic for the comedy is our heroes' political aspirations, culminating in a duet of their election theme song, a parodied version of "G'wan Home Your Mudder's Callin", known to collectors as "The Campaign Song" or "Come On Out". It seems likely that the words may have been written by Jimmy Durante, following his recording of the original tune which had been featured in his recent movie "Two Sisters From Boston".

An unusually, subdued Bing, returned the compliment on Jimmy's Rexall Drug programme of 5th November 1947. Durante is successful in inveigling the crooner into promoting his new song, "Chidabee, Chidabee, Chidabee (Yah! Yah! Yah!)". Crosby manages a brief "plug" for "Road To Rio" before becoming embroiled in a virtual re-run of, "The Song's Gotta Come from The Heart" as performed on Philco, in April.

Schnozzle was back again, for Philco, in February 1948, when the unlikely trio of Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante and Dick Haymes (slightingly referred to, throughout, as, "Haines"), found themselves "auditioning" for Mark Hellinger's, "new musical", blending their voices for a tribute to the variety stage in a pastiche of, "Mr. Gallagher & Mr. Shean", "What Ever Happened To Vaudeville?" and "While Strolling Through The Park". The vaudeville theme continues through a musical Philco commercial when the guest singers join Bing in the last chorus of a parodied version of "Harrigan" before closing the show with the aforementioned, "Chidabee, Chidabee, Chidabee".

On the 18th April 1948, both appeared on the 29th Annual Appeal for the New York Catholic Diocese, together with Pat O'Brien, Maureen O'Sullivan and Ann Blyth. The programme was sub-titled, "A Question Of Pianos" and although the occasion seems to demand a little respect from all concerned, Bing assists on, "Inka Dinka Doo" and enlists Ann Blyth for an unusual duet of "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" before the whole cast join in a chorus of, "The Sidewalks Of New York".

"Stop it, Jimmy! Please, I'm only human!"

It would be a full year before Jimmy Durante made his fifth and final appearance on Philco. His co-guest was Gertrude Niesen who accompanied Bing in a heartfelt rendition of, "It's Not His Mind, It's His Music" with musical accompaniment by the composer. Miss Niesen is sent into rhapsodies by "Ragtime Jimmy's" virtuoso piano playing and is compelled to plead, "What a technique! Stop it, Jimmy! Please, I'm only human!" which prompts another of those much used but always funny, Durante lines, "I show no moicy!"

Two days later, on the 4th February 1949, Bing appeared on Jimmy's radio show for Camel's ("Da cigarettes - not da soup!") and was co-opted into singing, "Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle". You probably won't have to be told that this excerpt was issued on the LP "Club Durant" but you may have to be reminded of Jimmy's words, at that time, "Everybody loved Bing and I'm no exception. Bing went over this song only twice before going on the air. After the show, he told me he sang it almost as good as me. Which, I imagine, is about all any singer could!"

Both men, reluctantly, made their first entry into television in the early Fifties. Durante admitted to being "scared" to take the plunge but ex-partner and manager, Lou Clayton, insisted and signed a deal with NBC which guaranteed security for the rest of Jimmy's life. Once initiated, he was hardly off the screen and his appearances far outweighed those of Crosby, including "All Star Revue","Colgate Comedy Hour", weekly appearances on the "Texaco Star Theatre" plus a weekly variety series with the Lennon Sisters and an Emmy award for best TV comedian. He hosted "The Hollywood Palace" on eight occasions and appeared, as guest, on three of the shows, hosted by Bing.

Audio tapes are not the best means of judging television shows. Dancers, jugglers, magicians and acrobats, in particular, do not come across well and it is always better to both see and hear your idols. It has been said that the Hollywood Palace of 5th December 1967, featured a re-creation of the Clayton, Jackson and Durante partnership by Milton Berle, Bing and Jimmy but the taped excerpts which are available fail to offer proof. So, it is fortunate that a video tape exists for "The Frank Sinatra Timex Show" of 19th October 1959. Was this earlier impersonation of the vaudeville trio, by Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and Dean Martin, the catalyst for the proposal that all three might star in "The Jimmy Durante Story" on the big screen? Not according to the evidence from this show. Frank explains the concept for the projected movie, stating that he will be playing Lou Clayton. Dino affirms that he will appear as Jimmy Durante but Bing, exercising more caution, pronounces that he has been "pencilled in" for the part of Eddie Jackson.

Let's try to look at the apparently, preposterous idea with some objectivity. After seeing Larry Parks in "The Boogie Man Will Get You" or "The Black Parachute" who would have said, "This guy's a natural to play Jolson". All the candidates for the "The Jimmy Durante Story" were accredited actors and it is not difficult to envisage Frank Sinatra playing the hard-headed, no-nonsense, Lou

An earlier photo of Jimmy, Bing and Frank, this time with Jose Iturbi ("Joe Eyeturbi")

Clayton. On the other hand, how was his tap-dancing? The only common ground shared by Dean Martin and Jimmy Durante was that they were both Italian. Could Dean have discarded his own carefully nurtured image to portray a high energy performer like Jimmy? High stepping, Eddie Jackson was, what was known in the early days of vaudeville, as a "coon shouter". Bing is credited with having a deceptively, powerful voice but in his fifty-seventh year, would he have found simulating Eddie's flamboyant capers, to be an unnecessary challenge?

This "preview" on the Timex show is inconclusive and answers no questions. Frank Sinatra only needs to be himself and sometimes, Dean Martin sounds almost like Durante. Bing dons the silk hat for "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey" and practises a few gentle dance steps. The act closes with an unbilled appearance by Jimmy Durante, urging them all to "get off!" and having the last word with, "Dere goes anudder Oscar for Fred Astaire!"

After a series of strokes which began in 1972, Jimmy's good natured comicality came to an end in 1980, a few days short of his 87th birthday. It would be hard to improve upon the words of his biographer, Gene Fowler, who wrote,

"There was a peculiar shine to this man, a grotesque tenderness that reached into the hearts of everyone and the love of him has lasted through the years".

Lionel Pairpoint

(Editor: It's certainly good to have Lionel back (from the doctor's?) and I had never realised before how many similarities there were between Bing and Jimmy.)

California Dreaming, Christmas Wishful Thinking

The New York Times of December 20, 1998 printed an article by Michael Beckerman in which he analysed Bing's most famous song. The plethora of articles about 'White Christmas' each year do not often add much to our knowledge, but Mr. Beckerman does come at his subject in a different way. We are therefore reproducing the article with grateful thanks to the author and to the New York Times.

It is a little short of astonishing that at a time when most people are obsessed with music of the last week, and classics may be no more than a year old, listeners still plug into several centuries of musical tradition every holiday season. Mall Muzak includes medieval, Renaissance and Baroque tunes ("O Come, O Come Emmanuel," "What Child Is This," "Joy to the World"), carols from the last century ("Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear") and hits from just about every decade through the 1960's ("Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Jingle Bell Rock").

Most of these deal with themes of winter ("Jingle Bells"), jubilation ("Joy to the World"), awe ("Adeste Fidelis") or purity ("Silent Night"). But the most popular American yuletide offering, Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," is about something altogether different.

This song, one of several numbers written for Bing Crosby to sing in the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn," has nestled so comfortably into the Christmas repertory that most people have probably stopped thinking about it. Yet there is far more here than generally meets the ear or the eye. The surprises begin at the real beginning, with the original verse, which is almost never included in recordings of the song:

The sun is shining, the grass is green,
The orange and palm trees sway.
There's never been such a day
In Beverly Hills, L.A.
But it's December the 24th,
And I am longing to be up north.

The sensuous glories of the sunny south cannot be fully experienced, the text makes clear, because a more elusive state is obscuring them: the even more ideal image of a white Christmas. So the song is set up as a vision of Utopia through a scrim of longing: not the depiction but the dream of the thing. The otherworldy ambivalence is summed up in the rhyme of the last two lines. Because "it's December the 24th," the singer is "longing to be up north."

North of Beverly Hills, of course, lie the Yukon and the Donner Party; nobody really wants to be up there. But we understand this as Hollywood's cockeyed diagonal ache for the cozy wooded spaces north of New York: Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont. The musical setting of the verse is tranquil, at first, with a slight Latin lilt on "There's never been such a day." An unexpected dissonance on "But it's" resolves almost immediately on "December the 24th," but the next line is even harsher and more unstable, as the piercing "And I am longing to be up north" leads to the famous chorus: "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas / Just like the ones I used to know."

Here the song becomes inscrutable. While the words "I'm dreaming of a" are given a rhapsodic turn, the ascent through the title words is wrenching. The phrase "white Christmas" is sung as surface tension pierced by an icicle. Yet this harshness dissolves instantly, and the music for the next snippet of text dips into the old tradition of idyllic sound used to depict both pastoral visions and Christmas. Indeed, the charming musical phrase "Just like the ones I used to know" might have come out of an 18th-century Christmas concerto. The next lines, "Where the treetops glisten / And children listen / To hear sleigh bells in the snow," parallel the first two, since "glisten" and "listen" both have a darkly sentimental character but "sleigh bells in the snow" is lighthearted and sensuous. (At this point in the film, Crosby strikes the Christmas tree ornaments with his pipe.) This invocation of bells recalls the performance convention that adds a wisp of "Jingle Bells" as a kind of coda to certain Christmas songs. Such practice is especially apt in "White Christmas," for not only do the two pieces share a particular shape, but the harmony at "To hear sleigh bells in the snow" is identical to that at "In a one-horse open sleigh (hey!)," suggesting that "Jingle Bells" was a model for Berlin's song.

After a literal repetition of the chorus on the words "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas / With every Christmas card I write," the most revealing moment occurs. "May your days be merry" builds up static energy, then there is that wonderful climactic leap to the word "bright," boldly extended. In Crosby's recording, the sound quality fulfills expectations of increased intensity and brightness, but there is an immediate move to a minor chord on the second half of the held note. Why should the word "bright" suddenly turn dark?

Something about this whole song is discomfiting. After all, the false paradise of Beverly Hills has been exposed, and the world of the white Christmas, which should be an authentic Eden, is also filled with dissonance and disturbing shadows.Yet this may be the most successful popular song of all time. How does one account for the popularity of such a dark song?

Has it been so successful because people do not notice these subtleties or because people are listening to them carefully? A common explanation for the triumph of "White Christmas" is that the song's sentimentality plugged into the fears and longings of Americans during the dark days of World War II, when the enticing image of Christmas stood in stark contrast to the harsh reports of losses and harrowing letters from the front. But that war has been over for a long time, and the song goes on.

Although great songs defy simple explanations, one might propose some reasons that "White Christmas" has become a kind of national treasure. It is curious to discover that the same harmonic darkening that infects the word "bright" also discolors the phrase "children listen." The. singer is dreaming of, among other things, children listening for sleigh bells. Does the dreamer ever hear that silvery tinkling? Do even the children in the dream hear it? Those unheard sounds may be a clue to the song's popularity, for what is "White Christmas" but a kind of holiday "Moby Dick," a distant image of things that can never be reclaimed: the past, childhood and innocence itself.

Much is made of the need for food, shelter and sex as a biological imperative, but one might consider another human activity almost as profound: the search for purity. There is no culture without purification rituals, and the huge role played by interlocking institutions like church and marriage reflects an attempt to mediate between the reality of our animal selves and our striving to place ourselves beyond them. Since music is a profound reflection of human consciousness, it should not be surprising to find both states represented. Yet while there are tens of thousands of musical moments devoted to suggesting states of purity, and a hundred fold more that can be associated with less pure images, only a few songs illustrate the pain of longing for the lost golden spaces of the imagination.

But at this season, many of us become one with Crosby, sitting among baubles, wishing for that unattainable and oxymoronic cold warmth of the holidays. The commercialization of Christmas is not the cause of our unease; the buying mania is but a symptom. As part of our humanity we long for a "bright" childhood that can never come again, and make ourselves neurotic and depressed searching for a perfect past which in all probability never existed.

Because it preserves the ambiguity of the human condition in a reasonably truthful way, "White Christmas" is not only the great American holiday song but also one of the most enduring insights into the human imagination ever to come out of American popular culture.

Michael Beckerman

ONCE IN A WHILE

The section of the magazine covering the obituaries of those connected with Bing.

Sylvia Sidney - was lost to us in July at the age of 88. The obituary in the Daily Telegraph observed that she "was an actress whose waif-like vulnerability made her peculiarly suitable to play downtrodden heroines of the Depression years." The peak of her fame was in the 1930s when she was first under contract to Paramount and then moved to Walter Wanger. Her most notable films were 'Fury' (1936), 'You Only Live Once' (1937), 'Dead End' (1937) and 'Sabotage' (1936). Her last film was 'Mars Attacks' (1996). The connection with Bing comes from her film 'Confessions of a Co-ed' (1931) in which the Rhythm Boys had a small cameo part. Also in an article which Bing wrote in 1934, he said that his favourite female star was Sylvia Sidney.

Herbert Wiere, the last surviving member of The Wiere Brothers comedy team died in August at the age of 91. Born in Vienna, the Wiere Brothers performed throughout the world from the 1930s until the Seventies. They made seven films, including 'Double Trouble' with Elvis Presley, and also performed on many top television shows. Bing's film 'Road to Rio' featured them and they also appeared on 'The Bing Crosby Show' which was transmitted by CBS-TV on April 25, 1954.

Frankie Vaughan, died aged 71 in September. Your Editor having mentioned going to see Little Richard and Chuck Berry in the last issue, must now admit that Frankie Vaughan was the idol of his early teenage years. Frankie had number one hits in the UK with 'Garden of Eden' (1957) and 'Tower of Strength' (1961) but it was 'Green Door' (which reached number two in 1956) which was probably his best known hit. His signature tune 'Give Me the Moonlight' gave him instant recognition wherever he went. An exciting 'live' performer, Frankie also had a useful screen career in the late 1950s and early 1960s and this led to the tenuous link with Bing as they both appeared in the film 'Let's Make Love' in 1960. Frankie played the part of Marilyn Monroe's boyfriend, an arrangement Marilyn wanted to carry over to real life, we are told. Frankie went on to become one of the most respected elder statesmen of British show-business earning vast amounts for charity.

Patricia Evelyn Sullivan - In Loving Memory - December 16, 1934 to July 25, 1999

Priscilla Koernig, sends her personal tribute to Crosby stalwart Pat Sullivan

In a way, this is the most difficult thing I've ever had to write; yet, it brings back many treasured memories I shared with one of my dearest friends, Pat Sullivan. Pat joined Bing in Heaven this past July. Pat and I always felt that we were not only friends, but were more like sisters, who neither one of us had.

Pat and I started corresponding in 1952 when we were both teenagers and new members of Club Crosby. Our mutual love for Bing originally brought us together. We met for the first time in 1953 when she came out to California for a visit. We met upon her arrival at the Greyhound Bus Depot in San Francisco (both carrying pictures of each other and paging each other over the public address system). She stayed with me in my newly acquired first apartment. I played tourist by taking her all around. Even though I was born in San Francisco (but raised in San Mateo from 7 until 18 years old, when my parents had both passed away) that was the first time that I really "saw" San Francisco.

She came out here again in 1954, the year I got my first car, after turning 21. In fact we vacationed together to Los Angeles, where she ventured to start her college education. Pat worked her way thru college which took her quite a few years to fulfill her dream of becoming a librarian, but we were always proud of the fact that she reached that goal, including a Master's Degree. Our friendship continued to grow very strongly each year as we continued to correspond very regularly, and also because of our mutual love and devotion to Bing, mainly, and to his fan clubs.

Pat with Bing in Hollywood, August 1974

Pat and I spent many more vacations together. We really enjoyed our trip to the East Coast in 1958 to meet Rena Alhanesi, who was President of Club Crosby for years, and 1962, when we returned there, and I spent a week in Milwaukee, staying at Pat's first apartment (after she was a college graduate and working as a librarian at Wisconsin University). I experienced my first and only White Christmas there and spent the holiday with Pat and her family. Pat's love of California brought her back again in the 60's and then, of course, permanently here from 1974 on.

We had so much fun attending rehearsals of Bing's first TV Special after his lung operation in 1974, when we also stayed at Larry Crosby's home. There are many treasured memories of the many times we followed Bing around the golf course, toured Bing's house in 1975, saw him perform at Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco yearly, had the pleasure of interviewing him three years in a row, our travels to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Francisco and Concord, California for Crosby concerts in 1976-1977 etc.

I will miss Pat terribly but will always know the joy she brought to my life by having known her. God Bless You, Pat.

Priscilla Koernig

Bing at South Bend, Indiana

When I visited Charles Baillie in May, he mentioned that his eldest daughter, Barbara Obenchain, lived in South Bend, Indiana. My ears pricked up immediately as I knew that Bing had passed through South Bend in 1945 and I asked Charles if he could persuade Barbara to visit her local library and investigate the old newspapers. Barbara was happy to co-operate and I have now received a number of press cuttings from late May 1945.

The South Bend Tribune of Sunday May 27 carried a headline 'Thousands Await Hope Show Monday Night'. Bob Hope and his radio show troupe were expected and it was something of a surprise the next day when the same paper announced:

HOPE ARRIVES IN CITY WITH BING CROSBY

It wasn't exactly the dark of the night but it was the wee hours of this morning when three gentlemen, distinguished in a humorous and vocal sort of a way, slipped into the city incognito, made for the Oliver hotel and hung 'Do Not Disturb' signs on their doors while they turned in a for a few hours rest.

But if the three had planned to remain incognito, their secret was not kept long. It was only a matter of minutes before the word was being flashed around that Bob Hope and Jerry Colonna had jumped the gun in their scheduled arrival this afternoon for their war bond show tonight and had brought with them none another than Bing Crosby.

That's right. Bing is in town with Bob. Late this morning William Klusmeier, chairman of the St. Joseph County War Finance Committee, said Bob told him that Bing would be his guest at Notre Dame stadium tonight, which probably means that Crosby will be prevailed upon to exercise his vocal cords with a little crooning.

Bing decided to accompany Bob to South Bend while the two were playing in a benefit golf match in Cleveland, Ohio, Sunday.....

....After a few hours of rest this morning in the hotel, Bob and Bing bestirred themselves to get ready for a golf match this afternoon at the South Bend Country Club....

The report was accompanied by a photograph which incredibly we already had in our files and it is therefore reproduced here with its original caption.

Bing Crosby, eager for a golf match this afternoon at the South Bend Country Club, listens in while Bob Hope, star on St. Joseph's seventh war loan show at 6 o'clock tonight in the Notre Dame stadium, makes a last-minute telephone call from the Oliver hotel.

The next day, The South Bend Tribune carried the news:

50,000 See Bob Hope Show

RADIO COMICS AT THEIR BEST; CROSBY SINGS

Audience Enthralled by Elaborate Program

by Ray Gregg, Tribune Staff Writer.

Notre Dame's stadium in all its football glory never played host to a more thrilling and entertainment-packed spectacle than the star-studded seventh war loan show headlining Bob Hope and Bing Crosby that drew more than 50,000 St. Joseph county war bond buyers into the oval Monday night.

Such was the co-operation offered to make the performance an all-time standout in the annals of the county that even the skies, which had been frowning for days, withdrew their threatening clouds late in the afternoon to present a canopy of blue for the massed pageantry of bands and the parade of radio and motion picture stars in front of the microphone.

From the moment that the Central High School band entered the stadium at precisely 6 o'clock to open the smoothly geared program the huge audience sat enthralled until it rose to sing 'God Bless America' shortly after 8 o'clock and regretfully leave two hours of pure enjoyment.

Much Applause for Crosby

The county's bond buyers had just finished giving their biggest hand of the evening to the performance of a quartet comprising Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Jerry Colonna and Tony Romano that closed the show, but much of the applause apparently was for Der Bingel, who had just done routines alone and with Hope. In fact, Bob and Bing became so interested in their clowning that the program ran over schedule by a few minutes but no one minded that.

Bing obliged with no less than four solos. His rendition of 'Sentimental Journey' so captivated some of the younger members of the audience that he halted momentarily in the middle of the song to remind the squealing bobby socksers, "Please, I'm an old man."

.....

The newspaper was not finished because on the sports pages was a report on Bob and Bing's golf match on the Monday afternoon. We will not reproduce the whole report as the headline tells most of the story:

HOPE, CROSBY PROVE THEY'RE GOOD GOLFERS

Bob Shoots a 41 to Bing's 43 at the Country Club.

We thank Barbara Obenchain for digging out this fascinating look at Bing's work in the war years. There must be so many local reports like this and if Bing passed your way during the war why not call in at your local library and look up what happened. We should be very pleased to read about it.

LEEDS 1999

Our annual meeting took place on October 3 at the Mansion House in Roundhay Park, Leeds and there were 67 people there. Although the 'official' starting time is 3 p.m., as always many members arrived early to meet friends and to hunt for bargains amongst the stalls offering Bing items.

Michael Crampton and his son Shaun had prepared new display boards which were much admired. Following his usual custom, Michael started the proceedings at 3 p.m. with Bing's signature tune and read messages of greeting from Wig Wiggins and David Currington. In welcoming those present, Michael picked out Bert Bishop, Phil Clarke and Harold Hanke who were attending for the first time. Greetings on video from Phillip Crosby, Charles and Nancy Baillie, and Priscilla Koernig were shown. Michael paid a handsome tribute to the work of the management team (and their respective partners) and in particular he expressed his sincere thanks to his wife Judy for her help and tolerance over the years, and especially during the last few months when Michael has been working away from home during the week.

Michael gave details of Lionel Pairpoint's radiography project which is nearing completion and Michael O'Toole (whose company is printing the document) gave an update. A splendid ICC calendar for 2000 was on sale at the meeting and this had been prepared by Jim Reilly in conjunction with Michael O'Toole using photographs supplied by Ron Bosley and Derek Perkins. Michael Crampton gave details on the forthcoming South Bank Show about Bing before introducing Jim Reilly who discussed his new supplement to his book 'The Songs of Bing Crosby on Compact Disc'. Jim informed the meeting about several new CDs which have just been issued.

Membership

Our hardworking Secretary / Treasurer Michael announced that membership of the ICC now stood at around 850 and included 345 in the USA thanks to Wig and Laura Wiggins' magnificent efforts. The proposed issue of a membership list which has been under consideration for many years was discussed and Michael indicated that he hoped to proceed with this in due course. He asked any members who did not wish to be included to write to him.

Michael welcomes Bert Bishop to Leeds for the first time.

Members observed a few moments silence for all members who have passed away over the last year. One of those we have lost is Vic Monk and his widow, Eve, has given Vic's collection to the club. During the day, this was sold off to those present and £152 was raised for club funds. Michael looked ahead to our 2000 meeting when the club would be celebrating its 50th. anniversary since its formation. Interestingly we still have 21 members who have been with us since our incorporation and these include Michael O'Toole who was present. Next year we shall be celebrating 35 years of our Leeds meeting and 25 years of holding the meeting at the Mansion House. At 4:30 p.m., Michael Crampton introduced Jim Reilly who presented the first part of a video presentation. Members watched in fascination as song extracts from the rarely

seen 'High Tor' were shown together with an interview with Bing at his Las Cruces home. The advertising for this interview had stated 'see a grouchy Bing Crosby give a tour of his home in Baja' and this proved to be manifestly unfair and inaccurate. Bing was affable and relaxed and in fact he didn't show us around his home. The interview was first shown on June 9, 1966 as part of a television programme 'Across the Seven Seas'. Jim's video presentation concluded with the songs from 'Double or Nothing' and then it was time for the Dinner.

The Dinner

For the first time for many years, Michael had dispensed with the formal layout of a top table and instead there were round tables which made it far easier for us to speak to each other. Shaun Crampton had prepared very professional menus and tickets which will prove to be nice keepsakes. At the end of the meal, Jim Reilly rose to propose a vote of thanks to Michael Crampton and indeed the entire Crampton family for their hard work in organising the event and for making it so enjoyable. During the after dinner chat, the management team stole away for a short meeting before the entire gathering reconvened to listen to a recording of 'Crooner's Lullaby'. A vote revealed that most of those present did not think it was Bing.

The time then arrived for Arnold Pope's quiz. This is the seventeenth year that Arnold had put us all through the ordeal of his quiz and the joint winners on this occasion were Bert Bishop and Barry Whittingham. John Martin had submitted a tape of a rare Crosby Calypso which had been played by Andy Kershaw on Radio 1 and members listened to this with great amusement.

Jon Oye's Drawing

During his visit to the USA earlier this year, Michael Crampton had visited Wig Wiggins and brought back with him a superb drawing by Jon Oye of Illinois in a specially selected frame. This was raffled and produced another £72 for club funds. Michael expressed the thanks of us all to Jon Oye and to Wig and Laura Wiggins for their kindness in donating the drawing to us.

After a further discussion about club matters which included the news that the UK and European subscriptions will go up to £10 from 1st. January next, Jim Reilly returned to present the final part of his video presentation which concluded with a video tour of Bing's Hillsborough home. All too soon, it was time to go and we all departed, not only having renewed old friendships and made new ones, but taking away a fresh transfusion of Crosbyana in our veins.

Our thanks to Michael Crampton for leading the meeting so effectively.

Malcolm Macfarlane

WHITHER GOEST THE ICC?

At the Leeds event, the management team held their first meeting since 1989. This may sound amazing but rarely do we have the chance to get-together because of geographical constraints. Wig Wiggins, David Currington and Keith Parkinson could not be with us but a useful discussion took place albeit curtailed by the need to rejoin the main meeting. I was asked to set out a summary of some of the points raised for the consideration of all members.

As a club we are increasingly successful and we are continuing to make good progress. As we grow, there may well be a need for more 'professionalism' and more planning in several areas. Where do we want to be in five years time and how do we get there?

MEMBERSHIP - Numbers are increasing nicely in the UK and the USA. Etty Gits would like to increase her profile in Europe and as a first step she will prepare an article for the magazine about her next meeting with club members in Holland. Australia may well have untapped potential for new members but the size of the country can be a limiting factor. David Currington has recently been involved with the production of a CD "A Bing Crosby Cavalcade of Song" and his address is quoted on it and this may bring in new members. His address is also given on the ICC calendar and with the calendar being advertised on the Internet it may find its way to Australian fans.

FINANCE - there is approximately £5,000 in the UK bank account at present which gives us sufficient to meet ongoing costs for the time being. A recent change with the distribution and printing of the magazine will increase our costs by £200 per issue but members should get their magazines more promptly and it should be possible to carry out a second proof reading to cut out some of the errors which have occasionally crept in. It was agreed that UK and European subscriptions would increase by £2 to £10 which would be the first increase since January 1995. To ensure continuity, Michael was asked to confirm that the bank account was in the name of the International Crosby Circle rather than in his name for the club. If the latter situation applied, problems could arise if anything happened to Michael. Also Michael will seek to improve the rate of interest being received on the club's credit balances. Looking ahead, we shall probably need to have the accounts audited at some time in the future and this could be carried out by a suitably qualified member.

MAGAZINE - whilst being pleased with the magazine, this could be improved by more sophisticated layouts and I shall work on this.

INTERNET - this will play an increasing part in the future and Michael and Shaun Crampton have made improvements to the club web site in recent months. I shall set up a simple site for BING magazine which may bring in enquiries and my site will link into the club's main site. An ideal situation would be for all club officers to have their own e-mail address.

SUCCESSION PLANNING - we should be particularly vulnerable if anything drastic happened to the Editor, the Secretary, the Photographs Editor or to our American representative. Jim Reilly will therefore become Assistant Secretary with immediate effect. Ron Bosley indicated that in the event of his demise his photographs collection and archives will pass to the Editor whoever he or she may be at the time. The use of a scanner might obviate the need for someone who could do their own black and white developing. While Wig Wiggins maintains excellent records (which he copies to Michael Crampton at regular

intervals) and it would be possible to continue to distribute the magazine in the USA and Canada in an emergency, he also provides many other member services that would need to be continued as well. There is a need for an Assistant Editor to work with me and to be able to take over from me if necessary and recruits will again be sought. It was agreed by all present that we must keep bringing talented people into the team either as 'officials' or contributors.

In summary, therefore, we are pleased with what we have achieved so far but as we enter our 50th. year, we must not be complacent and we must continue to challenge everything we do in order to maintain continual improvement.

Members comments and suggestions will, as always, be welcomed

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING ON TELEVISION - AS SEEN BY VARIETY MAGAZINE

In our last edition, I reproduced some of the reviews published in Variety magazine of Bing's television appearances and we left Bing in 1954. Bing largely avoided TV for the next year or two and a low key appearance on a Bob Hope Show was all there was until he filmed 'High Tor'. The reviews of 'High Tor' were deservedly poor and it was not until the Ed Sullivan Show in November 1956 that Bing seemed to be mastering the newer format. A year later with the Edsel Show, Bing really and truly arrived as a star of the small screen and lucrative contracts were his for the taking. The photograph shows Bing , Julie Andrews and Nancy Olson in 'High Tor' and we thank Greg Van Beek for providing the photograph.

Nov. 11, 1956

Tele Follow-up Comment

Ed Sullivan Show

Ed Sullivan packed his CBS-TV showcase Sunday night (11) with a veritable flock of "next to closing" acts, rich in marquee values and probably as bigtime a vaudeo layout as one could strive for. With Bing Crosby, Phil Silvers and Julie Andrews in the vanguard, there wasn't even room for the inevitable juggler-dog-animal turn, with the 8 to 9 vaudeo moving headlong into Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong in a pickup from the Chez Paree, Chi, for the curtain-raiser and practically succeeding—but not quite—in maintaining that breathless pace over the hour span. It was bigtime, designed to out-Trendex Trendex. It must have been the "Nielsen tally" night on tv. (Even the commercials, it seemed, in their own ludicrous way, were infected by the Sullivan stardust, with the trumpeting fanfare on the '57 Mercury unveiling attended by a cantata-themed buildup which was given the same profundity as a Westminster Choir-Philharmonic Orchestra premiere of Handel's "Messiah.")

The big hoopla, of course, and a rarity in the area of "live" tv, was the Crosby appearance and soloing of his "True Love," with an enforced reprise hitched to a Sullivan wager that it'll register second only to "White Christmas" in disclicks. "Love" was done to a Bing turn, but it was in the banter division, chiefly with Phil Silvers, that the Crosby personality asserted itself as of old. Their byplay in the show's opening moments set a pace for hilarity that was topped only when Silvers, in perhaps his most standout non-Bilko turn on tv, turned in a skit on "Ol' Man River" at a "Show Boat" rehearsal that hit a peak in comedies.

Julie Andrews was a delight to behold and hear as she went through a medley of "Wouldn't It Be Loverly" (from "My Fair Lady"), "Someone to Watch Over Me," an ideal choice styled to her natural and flawless delivery, and "I'll Follow My Secret Heart"—rewarding payment in kind to the network that financed the Andrews musical in the first place.

A scene from the "Sleeping Prince" legiter with Michael Redgrave and Barbara Bel Geddes, punctuated the latter portion and again posed the question whether a Sullivan showcasing is good or bad for the boxoffice when a vignette out of context leaves so much to be desired. A tribute to Life mag on its 20th anni with intros of Henry R. Luce and the other publishing factotums along with a "documentary" on the mag's race for time and deadline on the sinking of the Andrea Doria was a major plus in the plug department if not exactly scintillating programming. Kate Smith closed with "God Bless America." *Rose.*

May 24, 1955

Tele Review

BOB HOPE

(Tues., 8-9 p.m., NBC-TV)

Bob Hope last night drew the blinds on another television season with a show filmed most of the way and including parade of clips from his past Paramount films. Much of the comedy stemmed from the old footage and a scene from "The Seven Little Foys," which served as a glorified trailer. The big yocks were missing once his monolog was out of the way, the reprised clips being mostly kissing scenes.

On the guest list were Bing Crosby, Jane Russell and Don Hartman, production chief at Paramount. Latter parried quips with the comic and came off well with Hope doing the straighting. Crosby and Miss Russell served the purpose of name value but were used only sparingly as leadins to some of the old "Road" pictures. Their dialog was short on humor.

Hope dressed up some of the clips with running asides that were funnier than many of the scenes. He had browsed through the Par vaults for oldies dating back to "Thanks For the Memory" and running through the parade of "Road" pictures. The nostalgia dripped while Hope quipped, which may have set as well with the lookers as his live comicalities. Only the opening stand-up was in the Hope idiom of past months and chuckles had to do for the sought-after laughs. *Helm.*

MARCH 10, 1956

HIGH TOR
(Ford Star Jubilee)
With Bing Crosby, Nancy Olson, Julie Andrews, Everett Sloane, Hans Conreid, Lloyd Corrigan, others
TV Adaptation: Maxwell Anderson (with music by Arthur Schwartz)
Producer: Schwartz
Director: James Nielsen
90 Mins., Sat. (10), 9:30 p.m.
FORD MOTOR CO.
CBS-TV (film)
(J. Walter Thompson)

Bing Crosby's entry into the 90-minute spectacular on CBS-TV's "Ford Star Jubilee" Saturday night (10) was hardly as rewarding as the auspicious occasion warranted. Out of Maxwell Anderson's "High Tor" fantasy, originally presented on Broadway 20 years ago as a straight play, the network fashioned a filmusical version, the joint effort of Arthur Schwartz and Anderson (with Schwartz also doubling as producer).

The songs were good, at least a couple of them way up on the potential list of solid clicks. There was a stunning performance by Julie Andrews, the ex-ingenue of "Boy Friend," as the ephemeral Dutch phantom walking the "High Tor" mountain for 300 years. But basically what evolved was a flimsy "boy meets ghost, loses girl; boy loses ghost, gets girl" vehicle that would find it tough going as the bottom half of a theatrical double-feature.

Through it all, Crosby was lost. True, his ballading was good Crosby and his bouncy "John Barleycorn" rendition was one of the show's high spots, but his lovemaking had just about as much substance as the Dutch ghosts on High Tor. His poetic meanderings were neither fanciful nor symbolic. It just wasn't in the film clips for a placid and, let's face it, not-so-young contented guy in a comfortable jacket to project himself as an escapist from a materialist world through the flights of Anderson's dream on the Tappan Zee.

When he came upstage to do his songs (four in all) with all his muted charm and affability, it was strictly Crosby and not Van Dorn, the man in love with his mountain. For that matter the entire Dutch crew, from the captain down, had little understanding or feeling for what Anderson was trying to say.

Strange were many things about the production: why, for example, Crosby wasn't even given a nibble at the best of the Schwartz tunes, "When You're In Love," to which non-singer Everett Sloane fell heir. Or why the camera transitions were so awkward, considering the scope that the filmization afforded. Or why Ford permitted an invitation to a tuneout even before the film got started by an elongated commercial that must have consumed five minutes.

This musical version of bank robbers and unsavory crooks scheming to buy High Tor for traprock; spirits out of the Dutch past, and an unrealistic mountain recluse and his more down-to-earth sweetheart, also enlisted the services of Nancy Olson, who at least had a comprehensible role and therefore rang true in her performance. Hans Conreid and Lloyd Corrigan played the traprock swindlers so broadly that the supposed humor was lost and the mood and tempo of the play thrown askew.

It remained for Miss Andrews to really capture Anderson's elusive fantasy on life and love. Her best number was "Once Upon A Long Ago," which she sang with a clear, lovely voice and with unaffected charm.

The film was made for CBS in 12 days. It cost about $450,000. The network reserves the right to give it a couple more screenings, then it reverts to Crosby and Schwartz for any possible residual values. These are doubtful assets.

Rose.

Oct. 13, 1957

THE EDSEL SHOW
With Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, Rosemary Clooney, Louis Armstrong, Lindsay Crouse, The Four Preps, Mr. Conn & Mr. Mann, Norman Luboff Choir
Producer-Writer: Bill Morrow
Director: Seymour Berns
Musical Director: Toots Camarata
60 Mins., Sun. (13), 8 p.m.
EDSEL
CBS-TV, from Hollywood
(Foote, Cone & Belding)

"The Edsel Show," a special kickoff for Ford's new line of cars on tv, was a smooth, fast ride all the way. In fact, without even seeming to try, it shaped up as one of video's top musical offerings, in the same class as the Mary Martin-Ethel Merman layout several years ago on the "Ford Jubilee" show.

This time it was a tandem of Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, two savvy pros who were at the top of their form. For Crosby, it was his best tv showing to date and, for those who remember live radio way back when, Der Bingle generated the same easy charm that was responsible for his long run on the A.M. kilocycles. Sinatra, likewise, displayed a finesse and a sureness that bespeaks his multi-faceted show biz experience. In addition, the one-hour stanza showcased, among others, another veteran performer, Louis Armstrong, in some nifty routines.

But basically it was Crosby and Sinatra in a freewheeling songalog and an informal script that never got in the way of the singing. Working solo, duo and trio (with Rosemary Clooney), they covered several dozen songs, most of them in quickie versions. In the biggest production of a show that was marked by a minimum of production frills, Crosby and Sinatra did a song takeoff on "Around the World in 80 Days," winding up with Bob Hope entering for a short routine on "We're Off On The Road To Morocco."

Crosby's number with Armstrong and his combo on "Now You Has Jazz" was a crackerjack getaway. Satchmo returned again for a nifty rundown of "The Birth of the Blues" with Sinatra. Miss Clooney had one solo slot on a show ballad midway in the show while Lindsay Crosby, son of Bing, delivered "In the Middle of an Island" in fair style with backing from the Four Preps. In the hoofing division, Mr. Conn & Mr. Mann, two slick tapsters, were on and off fast.

For the final quarter-hour, Crosby, Sinatra and Miss Clooney joined in a clever medley of romantic oldies. As with the rest of the show, this routine was handled with a breezy comedic touch that didn't strain for the laughs.

The new Edsel cars were effectively plugged via some film clips and some asides from Crosby and Sinatra. The latter also appeared to slide in a plug for his upcoming show for Chesterfield on the ABC-TV network.

Herm.

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

It is with the utmost envy that I read Wig Wiggins' interesting pages in our magazine and contemplate the recorded collection of cinematic Crosbyana featured on TV in The States. Almost fifty screenings reported in the last issue alone! Even so, there's nothing prior to 1940, and the UK selection matches that in its own, depleted way. But it was enjoyable not only to watch, but also hear the favourable comments on EMPEROR WALTZ from radio presenters and workaday colleagues, all of which were favourable. Especially so as Bing's character is not in some sequences all that sympathetic a role, and it may be said that the, at times, vulgarly assertive Virgil Smith is in complete contrast to his usual, laid back, warm and friendly screen persona. However, there are some enjoyable moments and, for me, the highlight of the film is the effective pairing of the pooches by way of the song "I Kiss Your Hand, Madame" which, not surprisingly, has Joan Fontaine's Countess Johanna all of a-flutter, wandering out of the inn's bedroom completely forgetting her D.O.G! Bing's greatest film seduction' scene? By contrast "The Kiss In Your Eyes", for all its romantic setting, is rather contrived and clinical, lacking the spontaneity and sincerity of the earlier number. But overall the film is an agreeable operetta, with "The Friendly Mountains" a particularly uplifting, musical sequence. To get away with a non-yodelling 'yodel' in the company of an expert is quite an achievement. Apart from which the appeal of the immortal Nipper, here masquerading as Buttons, keeps the heart strings tuned to perfect pitch. Bing had his share of working with animals, from a Mack Sennett lion through Cuddles the bull to varying other species of studio fauna, enough that he was never, ever going to be upstaged by a litter of puppies - but it was a close run thing!

JULY		
ROAD TO SINGAPORE	Sky Cinema	24th
ROAD TO UTOPIA	Sky Cinema	3rd
AUGUST		
HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	8th
SEPTEMBER		
EMPEROR WALTZ	C4	9th
HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	13th
OCTOBER		
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG	C5	4th

The October 'Road' movie is the least frequently screened of all the travellers' tales, and most would agree that it was a rather sad conclusion to a very happy and successful series. From the moment Dorothy Lamour was

Bing attempts to explain himself in 'Emperor Waltz'.

sidelined it was destined to be doomed. Consisting of mainly in-jokes, the attraction for most of the UK audience was the casting of some half-dozen Brits in name spotting, minor roles which must have left overseas cinemagoers slightly bemused even though most of the best humour came from these guest spots. Sammy Cahn's lyrics were less than inspired for him, but Van Heusen's music was excellent and in collaboration with Johnny Burke he might well have had the best number - reprised from ROAD TO UTOPIA - in the mildly risqué "Personality"; if only it had been featured rather than just a snatch of it sung off-stage by Dottie Lamour. Her appearance gave us one of the most enjoyable sequences of the entire film, and she had the most telling exchange of dialogue with: "Is that the plot of the picture so far? I'd better hide you. " "From the killers?", replies Bob. "No. From the critics!", she explains.

On exploring the trivia trail a couple of minor curios came to light. The first of these being in a Carol Vorderman programme relating to collectibles of an unusual nature. A contributing participant came along with one of Bing's hats and an authenticating letter from Bing himself. The experts suggested that £1200 would be what a collector would expect to pay for such an item. My own opinion is that twelve hundred quid would buy an awful lot of CDs! The second of the curios is even more curious. What is it about Bing's voice or recordings that rates selection for Hitchcockian, spooky horror films? SABOTAGE, THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW, A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, and now I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER. In that latter 1997, fairly predictable killer thriller "Beautiful Girl" is both featured and credited; and I suppose the answer to the question is within the spirit of one of Bing's last song titles. There really is nothing that he hadn't sung about. What am I doing watching 'slasher movies' I hear you ask? It's all in the cause of research, folks!

RADIO TIMES

The bandwagon rolls on - thanks to the generosity of Ernest Sutkowski who, through committed supporters in England, supplies all the principal radio presenters with the new Crosby CDs with which to regale their listeners. A new Reader's Digest set, the album entitled *My Favorite Broadway Songs* (reviewed last issue by Jim Reilly) and a release in the Lost Gold Historical Radio Series of complete programmes have formed the basis of most the unrequested tracks featured in the last few months. Added to which the English releases of the much appreciated Jonzo label and Barry Whittingham's delectable air-shots on the Krafty Young Bing series have ensured that a wealth of classic Crosby has been made available to those whose occupation takes them, mainly nightly, into cluttered studios where ringing telephones, gremlin haunted equipment and mislaid letters appear to be the norm. Most have the professional wit and wisdom to overcome these travails, which only the occasional 'Whoops! Wrong track.' belies; leaving the listener to settle for the reassurance that at least it proves it's a live show!'

At the Leeds gathering long time Crosbyphile and friend, George Patmore, said to me 'You're more concerned with local radio, Bert.' That is very true; and for very good reasons. Firstly, there are so few national radio broadcasts where Bing can be heard and, secondly, enthusiastic members go to a lot of trouble to supply this column with cassettes of locally aired material. Exceptions to the first reason are Desmond Carrington whose BBC Radio 2 Sunday slot, 'All Time Greats', is the only nationally broadcast programme where Bing can be heard every week. This, as most will know, is a legacy of the Alan Dell days. Desmond plays a nicely varied selection frequently introducing the next track with the affectionate remark, 'I've no need to tell you who this is.' Among my own favourites were "Would You", the Brown - Freed waltz from the film, 'San Francisco' and one side of a treasured 78 owned since 1941, "That's For Me". How many readers, I wonder, will have seen in the national press the anecdote of teenage loitering layabouts being driven away from a Sydney, Australia shopping precinct by repeated playings of Bing's "My Heart Is Taking Lessons" over the tannoy system? Desmond related that little story on air, with the added thought that other troublesome areas might be similarly dealt with. I can't help thinking that given that kind of muzak a certain fraternity would bring brisker business to the shopping malls of Britain!

CLASSICS AND CURIOSITIES

Only a little less frequently is the Crosby content on Russell Davies' regular stint under that heading. Often critical, with an underlying cynicism, Russell researches his Sunday p.m. programme thoroughly and justifies the programme's title by drawing, perhaps unnecessary, attention to musical misdemeanours and unbridled liberties with arrangements, lyrics or screenplays. As an example there are no walnut trees or tides on the Isle of Capri, as the song would have you believe. But I thought it a little pedantic to criticise Billy May for the North African-style introductory bars to Bing and Rosie's "Calcutta", especially as many other places are mentioned in that recording, including the Casbah which would be correctly located in the context of the music. Again, what he considers are the clumsy key changes on Bing and Dixie Lee's "The Way You Look Tonight" come in for adverse comment. I'm sure we've all noted that accommodating arrangement similarly used on "A Fine Romance", and thought it an acceptable ploy to overcome the key differences of the duettists. However, keep playing Crosby, Russell, and we'll overlook your niggling perfectionism for the greater good of an otherwise interesting programme.

TWENTY SOMETHING

Sadly, not my age but a list on my work desk numbering that many presenters for whom I have hand-written notes relating to Bing tracks played since the last occasion that this column was collated. Their joint efforts covering most of England and Wales, with the exception of isolated pockets that fall outside of the earshot of dedicated members and their recording equipment. A hundred and fifty recordings would be a reasonable guess-timate and, therefore, neither practical nor desirable to comment on each and every one in detail. The object of this column is

to pick up on any trends, idiosyncrasies and anecdotes that embrace the Crosby cause as presented over the airwaves and perceived as being interesting enough to pass on to our membership. What follows is such a selection.

Frank Wappatt seems to have survived his health scare and continues to regularly regale his GMR listeners with musical Crosbyana. 'We should have our own Stars On 78 millennium disc of the best recordings of the 20th Century, and Bing Crosby has just got to be on it.', he noted after featuring "To See You Is To Love You". Frank also commented in a later programme what great voice Bing was in on his airshot of "I'll Be Seeing You", with accompaniment by the British Band of The Allied Expeditionary Force. His entire rendition, especially of the final note, held and extended, is arguably superior to the commercial recording.

David Lowe's 'As Time Goes By' is a request programme that almost always has reminiscences by association. Perhaps not always accurate. Was Bing ever available in 'Woolies' for 6d as a listener stated? Could he really have bought "June In January" in that establishment for that modest sum in 1934? I think not - for a start the UK Brunswick release wasn't issued until January 1935. But I'm getting into Russell Davies territory here, and the important thing is that he remembered the record and had it played. Another, this time lady listener, used Bing's "Smile Right Back At The Sun" in an attempt to trace her long lost, bridesmaid step-sister. Let's hope they were re-united on Bing's great big welcome mat'. 'A smashing song!', noted David. Meanwhile, good friend to this column, Maggie Ryan, also took advantage of David's programme to send birthday greetings - from Bing of course - to both husband and son The latter being reminded before fleeing the nest, after his 21st., of the benefits of "Home Cookin'"!

'Golden Oldies' is a programme title that speaks for itself. But Dewi Griffiths' Welsh lilt adds charm to the words and, in recent times, his resumé on BBC Radio Wales of Bing's career has been both knowledgeable and aptly illustrated with recordings stretching from "You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me" through to the final title in the alphabetical catalogue, "Zing A Little Zong". A gap that mirrors the time span since Bing departed this life. Can it really be that long?

Chris Robinson is a pretty amiable cove and includes as much Bing as any other local radio broadcaster in his BBC South & West programme. In playing "Three Little Words" he noted that it was the first recording of that number. As it came from the Ellington featured movie CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK that's not surprising, though the Ipana Troubadours weren't far behind that year with their version. However, Chris was less than accurate in stating that "Mexicali Rose" was revived for RHYTHM ON THE RANGE as this 1923 Jack Tenny - Helen Stone western ballad was revived on screen in a Gene Autry film of the same name as the song in 1939. But this was in the year following Bing's first of two recordings. Chris related in a further broadcast the story of a listener, and reader of his regular column in a local newspaper, who spotted his father-in-law in a photograph of Bing illustrating the column. He'd never seen this photo before and contacted Chris to say that his deceased relative had often spoken of carrying Bing's golf clubs from SS Liberte and was pleased to have it confirmed by this visual evidence. Bing tipped him a very generous £10 - 'more than a week's wages', no doubt happy to be in England and keen to compete with his sparring partner against Messrs. Ray and Peers in the September of 1952 charity golf match at Temple Golf Club, Maidenhead. Chris commented on this quirky little story of an instance where 'the great, the good and the famous pass through our patch.' See the back inside cover of the magazine for the full story.

NEW FACES

Or, to be more accurate, new names. I was unaware of the exact locations of Pam Spriggs, Ian Bass and Douglas Mounce on your wireless dial when all three turned up on my regular West Country cassette. A call to Maggie Ryan clarified that Pam Spriggs was a holiday stand-in on Radio Cornwall whilst Ian and Douglas were regulars on Radio Devon. As yet their Crosby contributions are sparse - though give it time. Pam did make Bing her featured artiste in a broadcast that included "Hello, Young Lovers" and "Any Town Is Paris When You're Young", which shows a pleasing willingness on her part to depart from the one-time regulars. Maybe that phase has passed. If so it is due to the tireless efforts of the 'publicity machine' of the ICC of which we are all a vital part.

However, one regular that it is good to hear from is Ann Hopper on her Cumbrian based broadcast. She likes to feature air-shots, and not just the usual material. How often do you hear Bing's War Bond promotions, for example? There's the flip side to the serious stuff though with the Bing and Burl Ives burlesquing, "Careless Love" - I'm goin' where the climate suits ma clothes', sings Bing. Them clothes!?, queries his rotund guest. And from the commercial releases, "Friendly Mountains", to coincide with the film on TV, and a rare airing of "If There's Anybody Here", the duet with his erstwhile 'small fry' brother, Donald O'Connor. That's just a couple from Mr. C among the several heard on lifting the lid of Ann's 'Music Box'.

OLD FACES

Judith Ley and Keith Fordyce continue to feature a light sprinkling of Der Bingle, but Hubert Gregg, Tony Gilliam, and Graham Danton have all but defected from the Crosby cause with only a half dozen tracks between them this time around. There hasn't been too much from Dr. Swing either. Not good enough, chaps! An air-shot from Judith's 'Sundown' programme that I particularly like is Bing's duet of "Isle Of Capri" with Miss Ley's first name namesake Judy Garland. Utterly charming and one of their most pleasing numbers despite the Davies-type geographical inaccuracies!.

Stan White continues to keep John Richards on the ball with the Bing content of BBC Radio Lincolnshire's 'Magical Memories', often making a 'personal appearance' by way of a 'phone-in contribution and regular requests of any pipe organ accompaniment records; "Little Lady Make Believe" being a perfect example of the type of track that appeals to our Kettering, Crosby companion. Had he been tuned in to BBC Radio 4 for Part 4 of Home Front on the 13th. August he would

also have heard another of his favoured numbers; "There's A Goldmine In The Sky", again Eddie Dunstedter in his pre-military promotion days. Thanks to Bill Wesley for the relevant page from the Radio Times. Bill also noting that a certain Christmas song was similarly featured in that story of wartime Britain.

NOTHING COULD BE FINER

One time broadcaster from pirate Radio Caroline, Keith Skues swam ashore to become legit and, rarely ever playing 'pop', entertains a vast audience with his nightly farrago of popular music that always includes scratchy 78s featuring obscure performers whose identity will be lost on most listeners. But Skuesy is well liked and respected among his peers. Mr. Bing Crosby gets a look in about once a week - not nearly as often as we would like, of course. But with such a huge, personal record library, which includes thousands of 78s, that's understandable. The Crosby mix is varied and very representative of both commercial recordings and excerpts from wireless days, "Lady Of Spain" and the Hope - Garland version of "Sam's Song" with Bing being just two examples. Standing in for Paul Barnes one evening, when the latter was absent for a major birthday week-end, he remarked: 'Barnsey always plays Bing Crosby so I'd better do so or the ICC heavies will be feeling my collar!'. "The Loneliness of Evening" was that evening's offering, with other occasions featuring the eternal question of the lovelorn wracked by uncertainty; "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't Ma Baby?", and possible answers from "I Can't Begin To Tell You", "Love Is Just Around The Corner" or "I'll Be Seeing You"!

If you want a perfect example of packing 'em in' tune in to Bill Rennells' late night entertainment programme. It's been noted here before just how little dialogue there is in his BBC Radio Thames Valley Sunday broadcasts of 'Harmony Night'. Throughout the weekday evenings there is more conversation, with listeners 'phoning in their news and views but, even so, Bing is far and away the most featured artiste, sometimes three an evening, and all made possible by the limited chat. All the records are requests for a particular song or performer, and much of his musical Crosbyana and information is under the aegis of Stan White; "Clementine" from the V-Disc set being an example, with the Autobiography "I Surrender Dear", with dialogue, "Missouri Waltz" and "East Side Of Heaven" all being good examples of imaginative alternatives to what was once the regular half-dozen old faithfuls.

CALENDAR QUANDARY

"Stingy" ? Now there's an endearing title! It might well have been whistled by butcher boys on their rounds contemplating their weekly remuneration from the guvnor, but hardly likely to have won the affection of a suitor's inamorata had he crooned it softly in her shell-like. Who are Guy Wood and Walter Hannah that they could have perpetrated such a jarring and dispassionate title for a song? Neither they nor the title are individually credited in the four volume 'Complete Encyclopaedia Of Popular Music and Jazz 1900 - 1950'. Yet, somehow, the publisher contrived to get Bing's name and photo on the cover of what was the August illustration on the ICC calendar this year. Still, it's a talking point and the cover of the sheet music is stylishly art-deco with Bing standing at a Columbia mike, impeccably attired in a dinner jacket, circa 1933. However, it created problems for Barnsey at the Beeb and his regular first of the month feature based on the calendar as no recordings of that song are known. As what was hoped would be an acceptable alternative Paul turned to the V-Disc set and, once again, played one of his favourites, "Shoo Fly Pie And Apple Pan Dowdy". Apparently, Guy Wood wrote this in conjunction with composer lyricist Sammy Gallop best known for "Elmer's Tune" and "Holiday For Strings". Now if, like me, you've often wondered what the origin of that featured culinary title was then enlightenment follows:

'The Pennsylvanian Dutch hausfrau would set out her molasses pies and all the while they were cooling the flies would gather, so that she was continually saying "Shoo flies!". The pie thus became known as shoo fly pie.'

Thanks to Paul Barnes for the recipe for both dishes - and that added explanation of the song's title. The recipes are not published here in this issue, but if space in the magazine permits some time in the future its inclusion could be arranged if it is thought appropriate.

"Changes" - most musical, and one of the wittiest songs ever written. Thus spake Barnsey, featuring another Bix and Bing classic, "My Pet", in the same session. What with "Happy Feet", "Out Of Nowhere" and "One More Time" (Count Basie's catch phrase) some classic Cros from his formative years has been featured in the Norwich based region. This now includes BBC Three Counties Radio on a Sunday evening amounting to eight counties in all. A terrific catchment area! What a boon for our kind of music, even if he's not pleasing all the listeners all of the time.

With that in mind attention can be drawn here to some miserable, disgruntled oaf - one Paul Wright - who wrote complaining of too much Crosby on Gold For Grown Ups, calling Bing a 'one-hit wonder' who should be relegated to the similar obscurity of Al Jolson and Donald Peers. Needless to say Barnsey countered such a stupid comment with a mannered and informed reply which his postbag was, later, to endorse. Indeed, Paddy Stones, of Ipswich, who commencing his letter, 'The most insulting statement ever made to the memory of a great man', tore into the offending listener with an intelligent response which, in Paddy's own words, in the face of such musical and statistical evidence proves Mr. Wright wrong! Also proving, I feel, that those who live in crass houses shouldn't throw Stones!

Bert Bishop. October 1999

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Here we are again, approaching the end of yet another year and this time it is the end of the 20th Century and we are now looking forward to heralding in the new millennium or should I more correctly say the year 2000. The CDs keep coming unabated and I have a bumper collection to review in this issue. 1999 has been another fruitful year for Crosby collectors. The one disappointment has been the failure of BMG to release the albums of radio material we were expecting back in the Spring. They could now materialise early next year as BMG have told me that three double albums should be released in January. My favourite CDs that I have reviewed this year are: 'Winter Wonderland', 'Jonzo Volume 18', 'A Bing Crosby Cavalcade Of Song', 'My Favorite Broadway Songs' and 'Bing Crosby The Collection'.

Bing Crosby Christmas - The Very Best Of Bing Crosby MCA MCAD12019 USA

1. It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas
2. Adeste Fideles (1942)
3. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
4. Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town (w. Andrews Sisters)
5. That Christmas Feeling
6. Deck The Halls / Away In A Manger / I Saw 3 Ships
7. Jingle Bells (w. The Andrews Sisters)
8. Silent Night (1942)
9. Christmas Is A-Comin'
10. The First Noel
11. I'll Be Home For Christmas
12. Here Comes Santa Claus (w. The Andrews Sisters)
13. The Christmas Song
14. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
15. Silver Bells (w. Carole Richards)
16. Sleigh Ride
17. I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
18. White Christmas (1942)

I am sure that those of you who were unable to obtain a copy of "The Voice of Christmas" last year will be pleased to learn that it is still to be available in USA record stores this coming Christmas. Due to the success of the double album MCA decided to ask Wig Wiggins for his help in putting together this new Christmas CD. At the time of going to press, I had not heard it but I am sure that the quality will be very good. I understand that a particularly clean copy of the 1942 original version of 'White Christmas' has been included which will no doubt please the collectors among us. I should also mention that Wig not only compiled the track listing but also wrote the liner notes for "Bing Crosby Christmas" .

A Bing Crosby Cavalcade Of Song Festival Interfussion D26291 Australia

1. Maria Elena, 2. Says My Heart, 3. Get Out And Get Under, 4. Oh You Crazy Moon, 5. Last Night's Gardenias, 6. The Man With The Mandolin, 7. Tell Me Little Gypsy, 8. Angel In Disguise, 9. Garden Of The Moon, 10. Blue Orchids, 11. When You Wore A Tulip, 12. In An Old Dutch Garden, 13. Down Where The Trade Winds Blow, 14. Make Believe Island, 15. Lilacs In The Rain, 16. When The Midnight Choo Choo Leaves For Alabam, 17. Hometown, 18. Virginia Lee, 19. You're A Sweetheart, 20. She Is The Sunshine Of Virginia, 21. My Little Girl, 22. Say Si Si, 23. Number 10 Lullaby Lane, 24. Love Is All, 25. It Was Wonderful Then, 26. You Walked By, 27. Fools Rush In, 28. May I Never Love Again, 29. I Know That You Know, 30. Play Fiddle Play / Goodbye Now

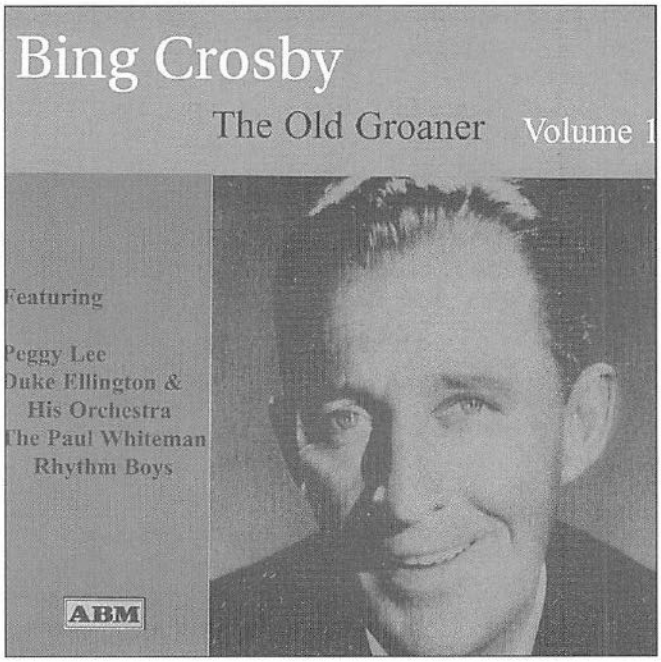
This fine album of KMH songs has been put together by our man from down under, David Currington, and a very good job he has made of it. This really is a most enjoyable CD, which is real pleasure to listen to. The sound quality is just about as good as you can get and it is hard to imagine that the songs were recorded some sixty years or so ago. The notes state that the songs are from the 30's but in the interest of accuracy over half are from 1940 or 1941. When you hear Bing in such good voice, it is easy to understand why he was so popular in those halcyon days of radio. The CD is nicely packaged and David wrote the sleeve notes. I am sure however that he was not responsible for the printing error that changed "Old Gold Cigarettes" to "Old GOD Cigarettes" - (perhaps they were a healthier version). Mind you mistakes creep in with the best-laid plans and I do not mean any offence to David by pointing this out - they also made a hash of his name. As far as I know this CD will not be available in the shops in the UK but it can be obtained by writing to me - I have a small batch, so if you want a copy don't hang around. At the time of going to press, I am not sure of any arrangement to sell it in the USA so it may be appropriate for our American friends to contact Wig Wiggins. Running Time: 71:03 Price: £11 incl. P &P UK. Rest of Europe £11.00 + £0.50.

Bing Crosby The Collection Marks & Spencer MS4811 UK

1. Dinah w Buddy Cole Trio
2. Please
3. Gone Fishin' w Louis Armstong
4. Down By The Old Mill Stream
5. Only Forever
6. Far Away Places
7. Pennies From Heaven
11. The Folks Who Live On The Hill
12. McNamara's Band
13. Sunday Monday Or Always
14. Dear Hearts And Gentle People
15. Home Cookin'
16. Play a Simple Melody w Gary Crosby
17. Now Is The Hour

8. Smile Right Back At The Sun
9. Moonlight Becomes You
10. Swinging On A Star
18. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
19. So Do I
20. It's More Fun Than A Picnic

I have to put my hand up and tell you that I had the great privilege of being responsible for the selection of titles and the running order used in this album. I had originally chosen Bing's version of 'Dinah' with the Mills Brothers but the Buddy Cole Trio somehow crept in during the mastering. Nevertheless I am happy with the outcome and the sound quality is indeed very good throughout. 'It's More Fun than A Picnic' makes its CD debut and 'Far Away Places', 'So Do I', 'Down By The Old Mill Stream', 'Smile Right Back At The Sun' and 'Home Cookin' are titles that have only had the odd outing on CD. The album is exclusive to Marks and Spencer and will probably only be available in their larger outlets. Running Time: 57:27 Price: £10.00 ?



Bing Crosby - The Old Groaner Volume 1 **Audio Book & Music Co. ABMMCD1028** **UK**

1. Temptation
2. You're A Sweet Little Headache
3. East Side Of Heaven
4. So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together
5. Please
6. Thanks
7. St Louis Blues
8. Changing Partners
9. It Might As Well Be Spring
10. Medley: The Old Lamplighter / It's A Good Day
11. On A Slow Boat To China
12. Cuanto La Gusta
13. I Got The Sun In The Morning
14. Clancy Lowered The Boom
15. I'm On The Crest Of A Wave
16. Out O' Town Gal
17. At Twilight
18. This Is My Night To Dream
19. Black Moonlight
20. We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines

Although this is a mixed selection of titles it is nevertheless a pleasant CD and generally, the quality is good. This company has only recently branched out into song as previously they dealt only with the spoken word with talking books and the like. When I asked them about their selections for this album they said it was their intention to be representative of Bing's career and hence the reason for choosing such a diversification of radio and commercially recorded material spanning some 54 years. I am not however totally convinced that it is a good idea to go straight from 1949 to 1929 with Clancy lowering his boom onto Paul Whiteman and clan. Maybe I am being a bit picky? It is still good to see another company deciding that Bing is worthy of inclusion in their catalogue. I understand that a Volume 2 is in the pipeline and I will keep you informed when this is available. We get another good printing misprint here with "So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together" becoming "So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Moll". I wonder who Moll was - perhaps she was out of the Hitchcock thriller "The Birds". I have seen this CD in a number of outlets so you should not have any difficulty obtaining it.
Running Time: 63:18 *Price: £7.99*

Swinging On A Star **Spectrum Music 544 1762** **UK**

1. Where The Blue Of The Night
2. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive w The Andrew Sisters
3. Stardust
4. Swinging On A Star
10. Dear Hearts And Gentle People
11. Moonlight Becomes You
12. Gone Fishin' w Louis Armstrong
13. In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening w Jane Wyman

5. Pennies From Heaven
6. Mexicali Rose
7. The Road To Morocco w Bob Hope
8. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
9. Don't Fence Me In w The Andrew Sisters
14. Galway Bay
15. Sam's Song w Gary Crosby
16. Sweet Leilani
17. Whiffenpoof Song
18. White Christmas (1947)

This album would probably be more aptly named 'The Best Of Bing Crosby' for this is exactly what you get - eighteen of Bing's best known songs. I am sure that some of you will think that all these titles have been over-used on CD, but who are we to argue with the record companies that say this is what Joe Public wants. They obviously would not waste their money if they did not think that there was a market for these Bing standards. I would not argue with you however if you said that the album title was over-used as this is the sixth CD that I know of with 'Swinging On a Star' for its title. I do however like this album, although I suppose I am rather biased as I was again privileged to be responsible for selecting the running order and wrote the liner notes. Running Time: 53:46 Price: £6.99

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 7 **Jonzo Records JZCD-7** **UK**

1. Waiting At The End Of The Road
2. When You're Counting The Stars Alone
3. Can't We Be Friends
4. Gay Love
5. Great Day
6. Without A Song
7. I'm A Dreamer Aren't We All
8. If I Had A Talking Picture Of You
9. Moonlight And Roses Medley
10. Southern Medley
11. A Bundle Of Old Love Letters
12. After You've Gone
13. Happy Feet
14. Song Of The Dawn
15. A Bench In The Park (W149825-1)
16. A Bench In The Park (W149825-2)
17. Livin' In The Sunlight Lovin' In The Moonlight
18. I Like To Do Things For You
19. You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me
20. A Bench In The Park (W149840)
21. Three Little Words

See below for comments

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 8 **Jonzo Records JZCD-8** **UK**

1. Fool Me Some More
2. It Must Be True
3. Them There Eyes
4. The Little Things In Life
5. I Surrender Dear
6. Thanks To You
7. One More Time
8. Wrap Your Trouble In Dreams
9. Just A Gigolo
10. Out Of Nowhere
11. If You Should Ever Need Me
12. Ho Hum
13. I'm Gonna Get You
14. Were You Sincere
15. Just One More Chance
16. I'm Thru With Love
17. Many Happy Returns Of The Day
18. I Found A Million Dollar Baby
19. At Your Command -A
20. At Your Command -B

Again, the quality is excellent and there is a lovely clarity to all tracks on both albums. With the exception of 'Great Day', 'Moonlight And Roses Medley', 'Fool Me Some More', 'Thanks To You', 'Ho Hum' and 'I'm Gonna Get You' and the alternate takes, all the other titles have appeared on compact disc previously. I do hope that this will not put you off purchasing both CDs, which are extremely good value for money. We now only need volumes 9 and 10 to complete the first ten years of Bing's recording career (1926-36). There will then be eighteen consecutive CDs of Bing's recordings on the Jonzo label with some 386 tracks. I congratulate John McNicholas for keeping this series going and providing such a great service to the Crosby cause. Price: JZCD 7 & 8 - These CDs are only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records Price: £8.65 each including pp or £17.00 for both CDs. Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

Legends Of The 20th Century -19 - Bing Crosby **EMI Records7243 522815 2 7** **UK**

1. Muskrat Ramble w Louis Armstrong
2. Sugar (That Sugar Baby Of Mine) w Louis Armstrong
3. Ciao Ciao Bambino w Rosemary Clooney
4. I Get Ideas (When I Dance With You) w Rosemary Clooney
5. Dardanella w Louis Armstrong
6. Let's Sing Like A Dixieland Band w Louis Armstrong
7. Pigalle
8. April In Portugal
9. Never On A Sunday
10. Man On Fire
14. C'est Si Bon
15. Morgen
16. Domenica
17. Under Paris Skies
18. Way Down Yonder In New Orleans w Louis A.
19. Lazy River w Louis Armstrong
20. Come To The Mardi Gras w. Rosemary Clooney
21. Brother Bill w Louis Armstrong
22. At The Jazz Band Ball w Louis Armstrong
23. Rocky Mountain Moon w Louis Armstrong

11. The Second Time Around
12. Teamwork w Bob Hope
13. Incurably Romantic
24. That Travellin' Two-Beat w Rosemary Clooney
25. Bye Bye Blues w Louis Armstrong

This is a nicely produced album presented in a book format rather than the usual CD case. It draws heavily for most of its contents from the LPs "Holiday In Europe"," That Travellin' Two-Beat "and "Bing and Satchmo". The only exceptions are 'Man On Fire', 'The Second Time Around', 'Teamwork' and 'Incurably Romantic' which were originally issued as singles. The sound quality is excellent throughout and the extensive liner notes (14 pages) include a nice variety of Bing photographs. Incidentally the notes are by noted writer, Will Friedwald, and I like this extract:

"....Crosby became the cultural counterpart of an industrial giant - a Henry Ford, an Andrew Carnegie. Between the hundreds of millions of records he himself sold and the many millions more by those singers he inspired, Crosby helped make the recording industry into a formidable business force - his nearly single-handed creation of the multibillion dollar Christmas song market was merely the smallest of his miracles."

For those who missed the CDs "That Travellin' Two-Beat" EMI Axis CDAX701597 (Australia) and "Holiday In Europe" MCA MVCM-294 (Japan) this will make a great addition to your collections. Mind you I bought it to get 'Man On Fire' which is fairly rare on CD. This is a thoroughly enjoyable album that you will not want to miss. It is one of a series of CDs having this same format and the others I have seen in the shops include Noel Coward, Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan. Running Time: 73:51 Price: £11.99

Original Sound Tracks

Holiday Inn / Road To Morocco / Two For Tonight Great Movie Themes CD 60027 UK

HOLIDAY INN: 1. Overture "Holiday Inn", 2. I'll Capture Your Heart, 3. Lazy, 4. You're Easy To Dance With - Fred Astaire, 5. White Christmas w Marjorie Reynolds, 6. Happy Holiday w Marjorie Reynolds, 7. Let's Start The New Year Right, 8. You're Easy To Dance With - Instrumental, 9. Abraham w Marjorie Reynolds, 10. Be Careful It's My Heart, 11. I Can't Tell A Lie - Fred Astaire, 12. Easter Parade, 13. Song Of Freedom, 14. Say It With Firecrackers - Danced by Fred Astaire, 15. Hollywood Montage - Instrumental, 16. I've Got Plenty To Be Thankful For, 17. Finale: White Christmas / I'll Capture Your Heart.

ROAD TO MOROCCO: 18. Road To Morocco w Bob Hope, 19. Ain't Got A Dime To My Name, 20. Constantly - Dorothy Lamour, 21. Moonlight Becomes You, 22. Moonlight Becomes You w Dorothy Lamour and Bob Hope

TWO FOR TONIGHT: 23. Two For Tonight, 24. Takes Two To Make A Bargain, 25. From The Top Of Your Head (To The Tip Of Your Toes), 26. Without A Word Of Warning, 27. I Wish I Were Aladdin

For those who like the sound track recordings from Bing's films, I am sure this will find favour although I would suspect that most members already have most of this material with 'Abraham' being the only track new to CD. The quality is good throughout and this is a reasonably priced album. Running Time: 71:02 Price: £5.99

The Great Bing Crosby (3 CDs) Red X 31034 Australia

CD1 1. It's Easy To Remember, 2. Remember Me, 3. Moonlight Becomes You, 4. In My Merry Oldsmobile, 5. Thanks, 6. Maybe, 7. Down The Old Ox Road, 8. Pennies From Heaven, 9. Brother Can You Spare A Dime, 10. Dinah, 11. Did You Ever See A Dream Walking, 12. I've Got The World On A String, 13. Someday Sweetheart, 14. Black Moonlight, 15. The Last Round-Up, 16. Song Of The Islands, 17. Silver On The Sage, 18. Blue Hawaii

CD2 1. Don't Be That Way, 2. On The Sentimental Side, 3. Sentimental And Melancholy, 4. Dancing In The Dark, 5. How Deep Is The Ocean, 6. Please, 7. White Christmas, 8. The Moon Got In My Eyes, 9. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby, 10. Only Forever, 11. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me, 12. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams, 13. Were You Sincere, 14. Still The Bluebird Sings, 15. If You Should Ever Need Me, 16. Sweet Georgia Brown, 17. An Apple For The Teacher, 18. A Ghost Of A Chance

CD3 1. Out Of Nowhere, 2. Too Marvellous For Words, 3. The Funny Old Hills, 4. Goodnight Sweetheart, 5. I'm An Old Cowhand, 6. Sweet Leilani, 7. Stardust, 8. Try A Little Tenderness, 9. Temptation, 10. This Is My Night To Dream, 11. Too Romantic, 12. Sweet And Lovely, 13. Road To Morocco, 14. What's New, 15. Somebody Loves Me, 16. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral, 17. Don't Fence Me In, 18. I'll Be Seeing You.

We have 54 Bing standards on this aptly named 3CD set and all have appeared on CD previously. It is nevertheless a nice selection of Crosby favourites and it is good to see another set from Australia after such a long drought. Funnily enough, I learnt of this set from our American representative Wig Wiggins (thanks Wig). I ordered a copy from the States and find that the quality is good and I enjoyed listening to all three CDs. Running Time: CD1 -55:40, CD2 - 53:05, CD3 - 53:47 Price USA: $20

Forever Gold
St Clair Entertainment FGD57362 Canada

1. Out Of Nowhere
2. If You Should Ever Need Me
3. PS I Love You
4. Dancing In The Dark
5. Sweet And Lovely
6. Stardust
7. Just A Gigolo
8. You Go To My Head
9. Down Yonder
10. Come What May
11. If This Isn't Love
12. Everything I Have Is Yours
13. I Got The Sun In The Morning
14. Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah

Not too much to shout about with this CD; the quality is poor on some of the radio tracks and I wouldn't mind betting that you can all guess as to which titles I am referring . I wish to thank Phil Clarke for loaning me this CD to enable me to review it. I understand that the CD was purchased in America and to date I have not seen it in the UK. Unfortunately, I cannot tell how much it cost or where you can obtain it and personally I won't be rushing out to try and get it myself. Running Time: 38.14

GUEST APPEARANCES

Bob Hope & Friends Put It There Pal (2 CDs) Jasmine Records JASCD 357/8 UK

CD 1 1. Harmony (a), 2. Road To Morocco (a), 3. Road To Morocco (a) (b), 4. Pittsburgh Pennsylvania (a) & Kay Starr, 5. Apalachicola FLA (a), 6. For What (a) 7. If I Knew You Were Coming I'd've Baked A Cake (a), 8. When We're Alone (c), 9. The Lady's In Love With You (c), 10. Goodtime Charlie (a), 11. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (a), 12. Put It There Pal (a), 13. Put It There Pal (Parody) (a), 14. Buttons And Bows (a) & Doris Day, 15. Beside You (b), 16. My Favourite Brunette (b)

CD 2 1. Captain Custard (a), 2. Harry Lime Theme (a) & Judy Garland, 3. Home On The Range (a) (b), 4. Sonny Boy w The Andrews Sisters, 5. Smile Darn You Smile & Daddy Dear Old Daddy (a), 6. It Happened In Monterey (a), 7. Moonlight Becomes You (a) & (b), 8. I Wish I Wuz (a) & Monica Lewis, 9. Medley (a) & Bob Crosby June In January / It's Been A Long Long Time / Coming Through The Rye / Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet, 10. Love Somebody w Doris Day, 11. Goodnight Irene (a) & Judy Garland, 12. Sweet Violets (a), 13. How 'Dja Like To Love Me w Martha Raye, 14. It's Love Love Love (a), 15. Hello Mom, 16. Two Sleepy People (c), 17. Thanks For The Memory (c)
- with (a) Bing Crosby, (b) Dorothy Lamour, (c) Shirley Ross

We have Geoff Milne to thank for this marvellous double album that combines radio, film sound track and commercially recorded material. Bing appears on 23 of the 33 tracks and there are some enjoyable sketches with the boys in fine form. The sound quality is excellent. One or two of the songs have appeared on CD previously but there is also a lot of new material and I recommend this CD to all members. No album of Bob Hope's would be complete without a large slice of "Road" or without his classics with Shirley Ross. Dorothy Lamour, Doris Day, Judy Garland, The Andrews Sisters and Bob Crosby also make guest appearances. When you listen to some of the sound track material you can picture the scenes from the films in question which I suppose comes from a misspent youth or television viewing of all those repeat showings of the Road films.
Running Times: Disc 1 - 59:08, Disc - 2 59:32 Price: £9.99

Xavier Cugat - South America Take It Away ASV Living Era AJACD5223 UK

24 tracks (4 Bing) Siboney, Baia, Hasta Manana and You Belong To My Heart.
I was alerted to this CD by Wig Wiggins and am pleased to have added it to my collection although it has been around since 1997. For those who like Latin American music, this is a extremely pleasant album with the added bonus of having all four of Bing's collaborations with Xavier Cugat. None of the Bing tracks has had over exposure on CD and 'Hasta Manana' makes its debut. Buddy Clark sings the title number "South America Take It Away" and a young sounding Dinah Shore makes four appearances on this reasonably priced CD. You will be pleased to know that the sound quality is very good. Price: £7.99

20 Centuries Of Hits Rhino R2 75468 USA

23 Tracks (1 Bing) Stardust.
I just had to include this CD as it really has to be seen to be believed. Wig Wiggins described this fairly fully in BING #122 and titles have been selected to represent the tastes in music from the past twenty centuries. The producers of this album in their wisdom decided that two songs should represent the 20th Century - these being Bing singing 'Stardust', and 'Louie Louie' by The Kingsmen. Some of the titles are rather mind boggling i.e. "First Delphic Hymn To Apollo"," Epitaph of Seikilos" and "Oxyrhynchus Hymn Fragment" to name but a few. I am indebted to Wig for sending me this oddity. I saw the album priced at £18.00 odd in HMV Oxford Street. I cannot see it reaching very high in the charts!

American Vocalists Empress RAJCD 905 EC

25 Tracks (2 Bing) Ballerina and You Do.
This is to my knowledge the first time "You Do" has found its way onto CD and I must say that it is good to hear this lovely song with the backing of Carmen Cavallaro on the piano. The quality of the album is better than some of the previous Empress offerings. Billy Eckstine, Lena Horne, Frank Sinatra, Kate Smith, Nellie Lutcher, Katherine Grayson, Art Lund, Ella Fitzgerald, Helen Forrest and Buddy Clark also get to sing a couple of numbers on this nice compilation. Price: £6.99

The Song Is You - Those Golden Love Songs (2 CDs) Perennial Music - Forever Gold PERCD 001 UK

50 Tracks (4 Bing) CD1 Begin The Beguine, Darling Je Vous Beaucoup, CD2 Moonlight Becomes You and Blue Skies.
This is yet another very pleasant compilation of our type of music with a few Bing tracks thrown in for good measure. The version of 'Darling Je Vous Beaucoup' is great and is probably the best recording I have heard of this lovely song. The sound quality is excellent throughout and I am indebted to Malcolm Macfarlane for letting

me know about this most enjoyable double album (he won it in a competition for Bank pensioners!). The galaxy of other stars appearing here sound like the who's who of show business and include Frank Sinatra, Billy Eckstine, Lena Horne, Johnny Mercer, Ella Fitzgerald, Perry Como, Frankie Laine, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Dick Haymes, Tony Martin, Nat King Cole, Fred Astaire, Vaughan Monroe, Buddy Clark and Dinah Shore. On the face of it may appear rather expensive at £21.95 but is good value when you consider that it is crammed full of well known standards viz. Almost Like Being In Love, It Had To Be You, All Of Me, When You Were Sweet Sixteen, The Girl That I Marry, Fools Rush In, Time After Time, The Things We Did Last Summer, They Say It's Wonderful, I'll Get By, Time On My Hands and many more. The twelve page sleeve notes are very informative and Bing gets a good mention. This album can only be obtained from Perennial Music Co Ltd., 69, Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3AY. I have obtained a special discount for those members wanting this CD, but you must mention that you are an ICC member and you will get it at the discount Price: CD £19.95 incl. P&P or Cassette £17.50 incl. P&P as arranged by their Mr Warren, Customer Services Manager. You can either order through the post or phone their 24 Hour FREEPHONE Ordering Service on 0800 5976497 quoting the International Crosby Circle magazine. A selection of postcard and cigarette style collector cards are given free with each purchase. Running Time: CD1 -76.12, CD2 - 73.31

The Fabulous Forties - That Golden Age Of Song **Perennial Music - Forever Gold PERCD 002 UK**

48 Tracks (6 Bing) CD1- Don't Fence Me In, Deep In The Heart Of Texas CD2 - Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive, A Gal In Calico, Swinging On A Star and It's Been A Long Long Time.

This is much the same formula as the above CD but this time we get to hear among others Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Vera Lynn, Dinah Shore, Dick Haymes, Helen O'Connell, the Andrews Sisters, Ethel Smith, Ann Shelton, Helen Forrest, The Ink Spots, Doris Day, Judy Garland, Deanna Durbin Billy Holiday, Nat King Cole and Al Jolson. There are also a few band numbers with Glenn Miller, Russ Morgan and Charlie Barnet. This really is a musical extravaganza with a lot of the best of the forties songs to enjoy in very good quality sound. Again this double CD or cassette is only available from Perennial Music Co Ltd and the same price discount as above applies Price: CD £19.95 incl. P&P or Cassette £17.50 incl. P&P A selection of postcard and cigarette style collector cards are given free with each purchase but this time they include a Crosby postcard and cigarette style card. Running Time: CD1 - 73.15, CD2 - 72.00

I thought that you might be interested to know that I received correspondence from John Tracy of Perennial Music who tells me that he too is a keen Crosby fan. The other interesting thing is that he told me that he had composed several songs for Bing in the mid-1970s, which were signed to a major publisher and accepted by Bing himself. Tragically, Bing died before the United Artists recording sessions which were to include them could take place.

NOTE:

One or two of our newer members have mistakenly thought that I stock and supply all the CDs I review in these pages and have consequently written to me asking me to send individual CDs. I am happy to oblige but do not want to be out of pocket by so doing. I need to check that the CDs in question are still available at the price guideline shown in my reviews. Members wanting my help in this connection should send me either a stamp or sae so that I can confirm the availability and the price.

Audio Cassettes

It is a very long time since I have reviewed material that has been produced solely for the audio cassette market and here we are with two such items. The following cassettes form part of a larger catalogue of a collection of Oscar winning films that include the likes of *Casablanca, Shane, The African Queen* and *Brief Encounter.* They were all adapted for radio and performed by many of the original film stars.

Road To Hollywood / The Bells Of St Mary's **Mr Punch Cat. No. 99048** **UK**

Side 1 Road To Hollywood This consists mainly of the Philco Radio show of 29 January 1947 and includes: My Heart Goes Crazy, Comedy patter w Bob Hope, The Road To Hollywood sketch w Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and Ken Carpenter, Put It There Pal w Bob Hope, Tumbling Tumbleweeds, Sweet Violets* w Bob Hope, Road to Morocco w Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour and Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (Parody)* w Bob Hope. *from later shows. The zany trio still makes me laugh whenever I hear them, as their comedy patter never appears to date. Maybe it is because it takes us back to days gone by and is pure nostalgia but I still find it funny and it therefore makes enjoyable listening although the quality is adversely affected by a degree of hum.

Side 2 The Bells Of St Mary's This is most probably the Screen Guild Players radio programme sponsored by Camel of 6 October 1947. It also stars Ingrid Bergman and Joan Carroll. Bing sings snatches of 'In The Land Of Beginning Again', 'Aren't You Glad You're You' and 'The Bells Of St Mary's'. There is some distortion of the link music, although it did not spoil my listening enjoyment. 'The Bells Of St Mary's' has long been one of my favourite Crosby films so I was bound to enjoy hearing Father Chuck O'Malley narrating this sequel to 'Going My Way'. Running Time: Approx. 1 hour. Price: £6.99

Philadelphia Story / Holiday Inn **Mr Punch Cat No. 99047** **UK**

Side 1 Philadelphia Story This is the radio adaptation of the 1940 film of the same name and it stars Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn and James Stewart who also appeared in the film. I am sure that we all know that this was the story on which the film 'High Society' was based. The quality is good and although our man was not taking part I found it most enjoyable.

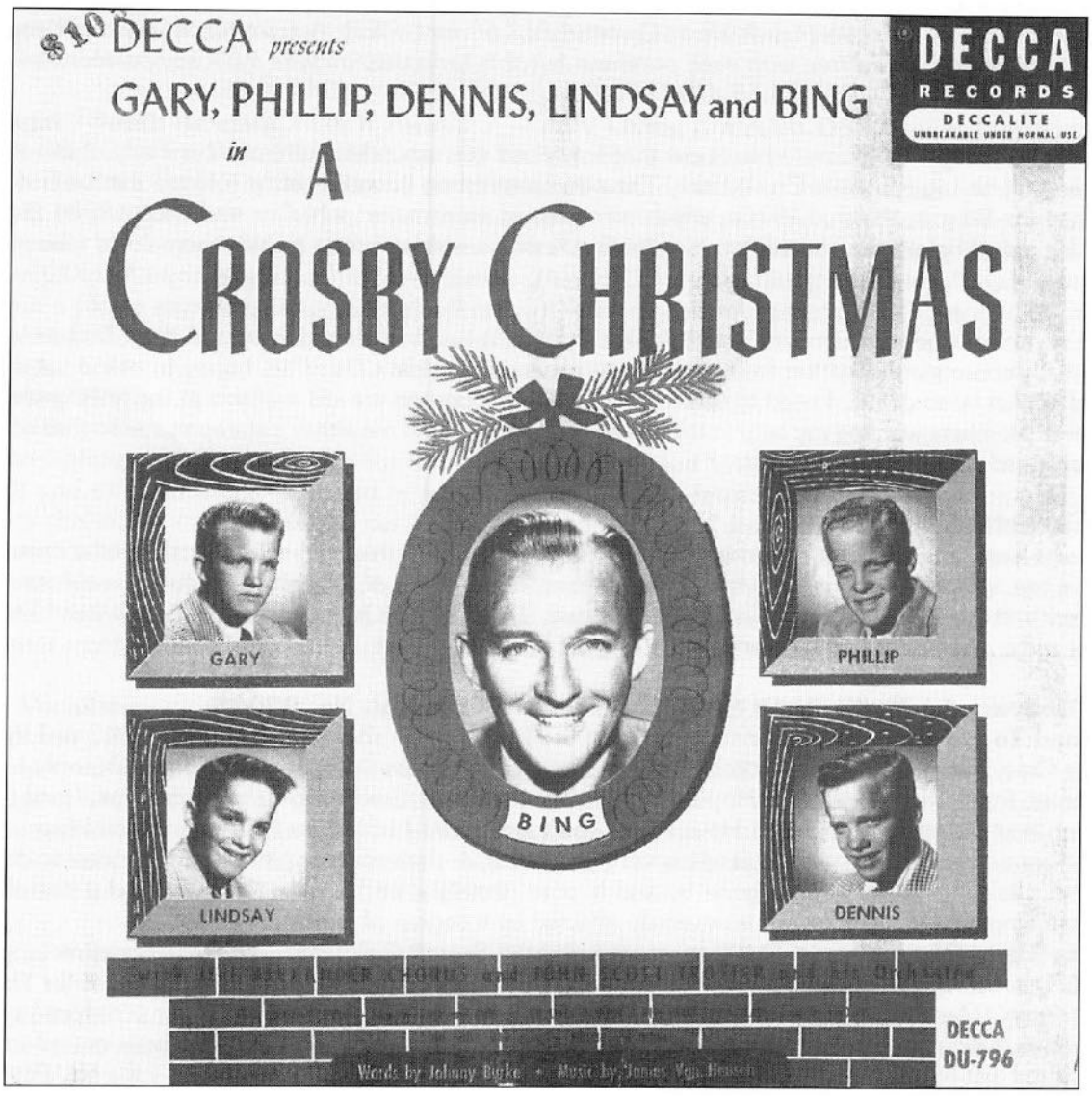
Side 2 Holiday Inn This would appear to be mainly from the radio programme of 11 January 1943 with The Screen Guild Players and Dinah Shore starring with Bing and is an adaptation of 'Holiday Inn'. The actual radio programme seems to be padded to include some additional songs and included: I'll Capture Your Heart w Fred Astaire, Lazy, White Christmas w Dinah Shore, Let's Start The New Year Right, Happy Holiday w Dinah Shore, Be Careful It's My Heart, Easter Parade and White Christmas sung by Dinah Shore (with Bing joining in at the end). There is some surface noise on one or two of the songs but generally the quality is fine and I again found this to be an enjoyable listening experience. Running Time: Approx. 1 Hour Price: £6.99

The best places to look for these cassettes are in book shops and some motorway service stations. If you have trouble finding them you can contact Mr Punch direct on 0171 368 0088 (but don't ask for Judy!)

Geoff Milne tells me that the second volume of 'Bing Crosby - Going Hollywood' is to be released January / February. I thought you would want to know so that you can keep an eye open for this double CD. I hope to review it in the next issue of BING - half the songs, there are 50 in all, are taken from film sound tracks, whilst three are cutting-room floor rejects. This should be another good CD to add to our collections.

I would like to thank all those people who advised me of new issues of CDs during the course of the year and I must take this opportunity in wishing all our members a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. Don't forget to order your Bing Crosby Calendars - they make excellent Christmas presents. Until next year, best wishes,

Jim Reilly



IF I LOVED YOU

The reappearance of this song on the 'My Favorite Broadway Songs' CD prompted Stan White to recall a conversation with Buddy Cole many years ago.

At one of the recording sessions, probably in 1956, for those radio programmes in which Bing was accompanied by Buddy Cole and his Trio, Bing had recorded several songs when producer Murdo McKenzie said to Bing and the musicians, "The next song is, "If I Loved You"."

To everyone's surprise, Bing stated quite firmly that he would not record the song. Drummer Nick Fatool, who had known Bing for many years, asked Bing why he did not like the song. Bing replied that it was nothing to do with not liking it, but that the song had given him trouble in the past. Buddy Cole sought clarification, so Bing recalled first recording the song commercially in 1945 (April 18) with John Scott Trotter backing him, and a couple of years later he heard it being played on the radio when he was in the car. Bing said that as he listened he thought to himself, "no wonder they call me the groaner, because it sounded like I was groaning rather than singing."

Bing got on to Jack Kapp and John Scott, and asked for the song to be recorded again, with the first version being scrapped. So on the 24th December 1947, he recorded it again with Trotter. Later Bing compared the two recordings, and asked Dixie for her views. Dixie offered the opinion that they both sounded about the same to her! Fred Reynolds, by contrast, said in his Crosby Collection series that "Crosby, however, this time gives an improved performance and sings with more assurance and better control."

Bing told all who were in the studio that he would not attempt to record the song again, and that he had refused when it was suggested that he should use the song in a radio programme with Trotter. Apparently he was uncomfortable with the song in 1945, but had not listened to a playback, then he heard it in the car. Buddy said that Bing obviously considered it a difficult song for him to sing, but felt that had Bing just tried it with the piano accompaniment, they could have managed, but it was not to be.

I can't remember Buddy's exact words, but that is the story. Listening to the 1947 version on the CD "My Favorite Broadway Songs" and being aware of the above studio chat, I can sense that Bing was still not at ease with the song.

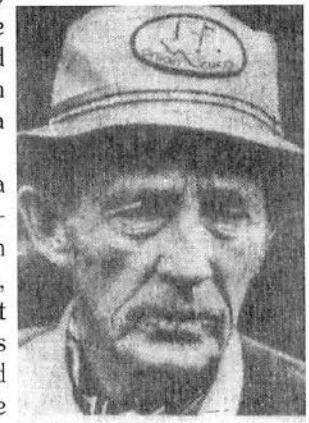
Stan White

(Editor: An interesting story and certainly the song, as arranged by John Scott Trotter, did not suit Bing, but I do agree with Buddy Cole that a nice easy piano accompaniment and a gentler approach by Bing might have been successful.)

An Irishman's Diary

Michael O'Toole sent me a cutting from The Irish Times of August 15, 1980 in which Niall Kiely had a column bearing the above title. The article finishes as follows:

One is loath too, to broach right now the subject of distinguished visitors and local press treatment of their sensitivities, but it seems a pity that a hand-written note penned by a late, famous and well-loved singer and actor on the topic should not find a wider public airing.



Bing Crosby . . . the shot on the right by Tom Lawlor.

The letter was sparked by a rather splendid series of front-page photographs by Tom Lawlor of the man in question, complete with golf hat, a cravat and, sadly but truly, the marks of his advanced years. It led one letter-writer to accuse The Irish Times of succumbing to a touch of something called "the pre-dawn Leftist syndrome" and eventually led the subject of the pics to write the following:

"Dear Mr. Lawlor,

In my 50 years in showbusiness, it has been abundantly clear that press photographers consistently use the most unflattering shots of public figures they can contrive. If the subject can be caught picking his nose or scratching his seat it's a personal triumph for the photographer. But I must say that on the basis of the pictures you used in this morning's Times, I'm quite ready to concede you the championship. Particularly the shot on the right. Congratulations - Bing Crosby."

PHILCO RADIO TIME STARRING - BING CROSBY

Eddie Rice recently sent me a parcel of newspaper cuttings and other bits and pieces which he wanted to share with other members. One interesting envelope contained a pack which was obviously sent to each local radio station to accompany a transcribed Philco broadcast. There were suggested press releases together with photos but what really amazed me was the instructions to the playback engineer. It's not a job I should have wanted as you will read from the following which I have reproduced from the pack relating to the Philco show of February, 12, 1947.

"ATTENTION STATION MANAGER INSTRUCTION AND CUE SHEET PHILCO RADIO TIME STARRING - BING CROSBY PROGRAM N0. 18

This sheet will give your play-back Engineers and local Announcers Information about their part In the production of "PHILCO RADIO TIME" starring Bing Crosby, Program No. 18.

The recordings are to be played continuously from beginning to end. The pick-up is not to be lifted from

the records until their conclusion since the show has been timed out to approximately 29:30. At points where the local Announcer cuts into the program, the record should be cut out, but it should continue to play and the local Announcer should match his reading time with the recording, in accord with the Cue List set forth below.

IMPORTANT

PART 2 OF THIS PROGRAM STARTS INSIDE! PLEASE MAKE CERTAIN YOUR PLAYBACK ENGINEER UNDERSTANDS PART 2 STARTS INSIDE:

This recording should be played at the orthacoustic (or equivalent) setting on your play-back and at a constant level. There is no necessity to ride gain. It is not necessary for the local Announcer or the Station to identify these recordings as transcriptions on the air since this is already done in the program at both beginning and end.

CUE SHEET

1. At approximately 3:57 after the beginning of the program Crosby finishes singing "RAINY NIGHT IN RIO." At approximately 4:21 Carpenter says "CERTAINLY THAT APPLIES TO PHILCO RADIOS AND RADIO-PHONOGRAPHS." This is the cue line for the first Commercial. (Note: Since Crosby talks almost immediately, it will be necessary to make a fast fade-out as soon as Carpenter gives the cue-line,)
2. First cut-in Commercial as read by the Local Announcer should run not longer than 1:06.
3. At approximately 5:27 the play-back engineer should cut back to the record with a fast fade picking up the music which immediately follows the Commercial, which ends with Crosby saying "YOU'RE A BRAVE MAN, KEN." and Ken saying, "I THANK YOU."
4. At approximately 14:28 in the middle of The Groucho Marx spot, Marx says "WHEN SHE FINALLY GETS HIM CORNERED YOU SPLASH MUD ON HER AND HE JILTS HER." This is the cue to switch over instantaneously to Part 2, program 18, picking up with Crosby's line "OH, I'M A BEAST."
5. At approximately 23:15 after the beginning of the program, Crosby and Peggy Lee finish singing their duet "THE BEST MAN". At approximately 23:23 Crosby says "NOW SHALL WE HEAR FROM PHILCO'S BEST MAN"... This is the cue for the second cut-in Commercial.
6. Second cut-in Commercial as read by the local Announcer should run not longer than 1:08.
7. At approximately 24:31 after the beginning of the program the playback engineer should cut back to the record with a fast fade picking up the music which follows the commercial.
8. Carpenter's closing begins at approximately 23:54 after the beginning of the program and concludes at approximately 29:19. Closing theme "BLUE OF THE NIGHT" fills to approximately 29.58.

A stroboscope is affixed to the back of both transcriptions - Part 1 and 2. It is requested that you check your turn-tables with this stroboscope to see that they are running at exactly 33 1/3 RPM'S. Any slight variation in the speed of your tables will alter the length of the program and put the cue times in error. It is requested that when checking your tables with this stroboscope you place your pick-up in the blank grooves provided on the transcriptions and play the record since the weight of the record and the pick-up drag will noticeably slow down the speed of your table.

We are most anxious that local station production of Philco Radio Time be top-notch in quality. We're certain you also want that. We, therefore, request that if it is not already your practice, you have your Engineer and local Announcer run a dress rehearsal of the program before it goes on the air.

As is stated on the records these transcriptions must be returned within 7 days to Philco. A return label is enclosed for your convenience in making this shipment. TO INSURE THAT YOU ARE CREDITED WITH RETURNING THESE RECORDS PLEASE INSERT YOUR CALL LETTERS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE LABEL,

Thank you very much for your effort and cooperation in helping us make Philco Radio Time a success.

HUTCHINS ADVERTISING COMPANY
8619 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles 46, California

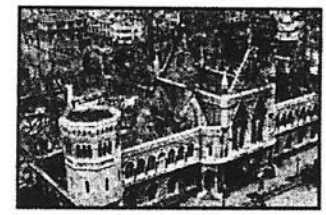
CAUTION

THE TRANSCRIPTION FOR THE BING CROSBY PHILCO RADIO TIME PROGRAM IS NOT TO BE PLAYED PRIOR TO BROADCAST FOR OR WITHIN HEARING OF ANYONE EXCEPT THE NECESSARY STATION PERSONNEL, FOR REHEARSAL AND CUEING PURPOSES."

(Editor: See what I mean ? You can imagine the problems arising with 400 different radio stations broadcasting the show. The arrival of tape recorders a year or two later would have solved many of the problems and we can see why Bing was so keen to employ these.)

PROMOTIONAL SOUVENIR RECORD GIVEN TO EVERY BUYER OF A PHILCO RADIO. LABEL STATES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE ISSUE WAS TO COMMEMORATE THE PRODUCTION OF THE 20 MILLIONTH RADIO WHEN, IN REALITY, IT THE PURPOSE WAS TO INCREASE THE SALE OF PHILCO RADIOS. THIS RECORDING WAS ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON DECCA #3354 AND WAS RECORDED IN LOS ANGELES ON 20 JULY, 1940.

Rekindle your memories of Plymouth in our weekly double page Looking Back feature. Don't forget, every Saturday we feature in our Then and Now section a view of Plymouth now and as it once was. So keep your letters and photographs coming – send them to me, Chris Robinson, at Looking Back, 17 Brest Road, Derriford, Plymouth PL6 5AA.



Bing's tip was a week's wage

YOU may have already seen this picture in the Herald – it was included a few weeks back in the Plymouth People's History Millennium supplement looking at the 1950s.

The picture dates from September 18, 1952, and was taken by Norman Hine, of Plymstock.

As a keen amateur, he snapped a number of the famous faces passing through Millbay Docks in those days, mostly in the early hours of the morning.

The famous face here belongs to one of the greatest entertainers of the century, Bing Crosby.

Bing had crossed the Atlantic on the liner Liberte and during the voyage had been working on his life story with Pete Martin.

Bing was paying a brief visit to England to play golf at Maidenhead with his old pal Bob Hope, with whom he'd just finished filming the Road To Bali.

In a game that had been organised to raise funds for a charity presided over by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Hope/Crosby team was up against two top British entertainers of the day – Donald Peers and Ted Ray.

The Herald report at the time noted that Bing was due in Paris the following week to start work on a new film, Little Boy Lost, based on a Marghanita Laski novel (it co-starred Claude Dauphin and the young Christian Fourcade).

The picture is interesting enough but what makes it extra special for one family of Herald readers was seeing the man who for them was the real star – Bill Vincent, seen behind Bing.

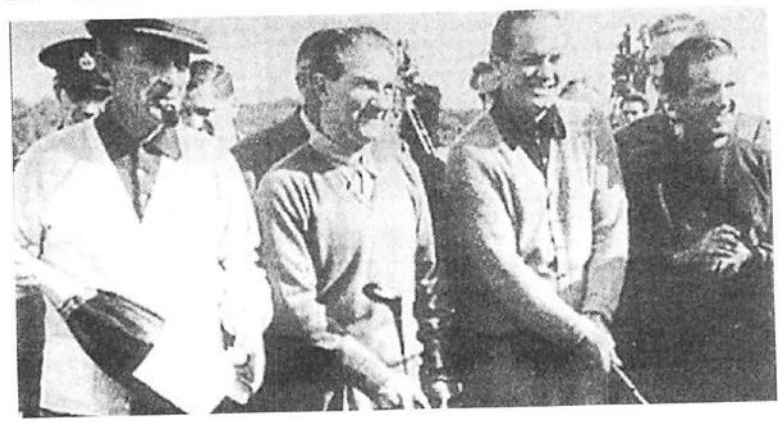
Geoff Dustan, of Hartley, called to tell me that Bill, his father-in-law, often related he had carried the bags of the great entertainer.

Bill worked as a docker at Millbay in those days and used to carry bags for many passengers arriving from the liners and looking to make the swift transition to train to continue their journey. On this occasion, Bill says that Bing gave him a £10 tip.

That sounds generous now but was a fortune in 1952 – more than a week's wages for Bill.

Seeing Norman's photograph in our recent supplement was the first time the family ever had photographic proof of Bill's historic encounter.

Thanks to Norman, they do now!



ABOVE: Norman Hine's photograph of Bing Crosby shows Bill Vincent, behind him.

LEFT: Bing with Donald Peers, Bob Hope and Ted Ray at the charity golf match

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